No. 62. DEC. 30th 1910 5 Cents

ALL AROUND WEEKLY.

THE TATTOOED HAND.

By ED KING.

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

The spear point had almost touched the skin of the poor captive, when Ned leaped forward to the rescue. He brought the club down on the cannibal.

FRANK TOUSEY
PUBLISHER
24 UNION SQUARE
NEW YORK

ALL AROUND WEEKLY

CONTAINING STORIES OF ALL KINDS

Issued Weekly—By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1910, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 62. NEW YORK, DECEMBER 30, 1910. PRICE 5 CENTS.

The Tattooed Hand

OR,

A STRANGE STORY OF SEA AND LAND

By ED. KING

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN WITH THE TATTOOED HAND.

The good ship Halcyon was speeding over the Pacific Ocean, bound for Guyaquil, one lovely autumn day many years ago.

On board were two boys, sailor lads, devoted chums, who had taken to the sea for a livelihood, both being dependent upon their own exertions for their progress in life.

Ned Singleton was sixteen, fair-haired, blue-eyed, tall and slight, handsome and manly-looking, with light, crisp curls clustering about his forehead, and a most winning expression of countenance.

Oliver Sturtevant, his companion, was seventeen, and as far as looks went was the very opposite of Ned, being dark complexioned, with raven-black hair and eyes, and just the suspicion of a black mustache; was of medium height and thick set, though graceful in his movements, and seemed twice as strong as Ned, as he was in very truth.

Noll—he was never called Oliver by Ned, or any one else—was as devoted to his friend as ever a boy was, and had always been a sort of protector to the latter, fighting his battles with all the vim of the knights-errant of old.

The boys were both ordinary seamen on the Halcyon, and expected to depend upon the sea for their living, as we shall see. Ned hoped to come into a fortune, aside from his earnings as a sailor.

This afternoon both are off duty, but as it is hot in the forecastle they are seated astride the bowsprit, in the lee of the large jib, conversing and gazing occasionally out to sea.

"So you think you will be able to find the treasure when you get to Guyaquil, Ned, old fellow, do you?" asked Noll.

"Beyond a doubt, for the place is marked out on the chart so that there can be no mistake in finding it. My grandfather explained to me just where he hid it, when pursued by Indians, on his return from the Peruvian mines."

"And he never returned for it?"

"No, nor any of his companions. Two of them died on the way to the coast, and the others, taking ship at once, never returned."

"The old man never went back to get the treasure then?"

"No; he drifted about from place to place, but never seemed able to get to that part of the world. The others died, leaving him their portions, as well as the secret of the hiding-place, having told no one about it, and then, when he lost his leg in the war, and received a pension, he did not seem to care about going after it."

"And it has laid there all these years, untouched?"

"Yes, and this is his legacy to me, besides what property he has other than this, which, by the way, is considerable."

"You will be rich, then, some day, Ned?"

"Yes, but I must work for my living, and be in a good position, before I can touch a penny of grandfather's money, and I must also bring back this treasure before I can claim it."

"You are the only heir, now that your father is dead?"

"Yes; and if I should die young, as may happen, of course, you will be my heir, Noll; remember that."

"We shall both live to be old men, Ned, in all likelihood."

"Perhaps so, Noll, but I've got my will made out in due form, and should anything happen to me, you will find it in the lining of my vest on the left side."

"I'll remember, Ned, but I fancy your vest will be sadly worn out before I shall have to take possession of this document."

"Oh, well, I don't—— Hallo! what's the matter there? By Jove, there's a squall come upon us almost without our knowing it."

"And likely to prove a bad one, too," added Noll, jumping on deck in a trice, as the captain began to issue hasty orders to take in sail.

Ned followed, and both boys flew to assist their mates, the necessity of prompt action being most pressing.

The squall had taken them unawares, and left them little time for preparation.

All hands were called on deck, but before those off watch could answer the summons, the tempest broke with awful force upon the doomed vessel.

The air became as black as night, the waves were all on fire with phosphoric light; the very heavens seemed to open and the foundations of the earth to shake; the thunder and lightning were positively frightful; the rain fell in great masses, and the dashing waves poured tons upon tons on the vessel as they broke over its side.

Sail after sail was blown away, spar after spar was snapped or wrenched in twain by the whirling wind, and the lightning striking the main-mast shivered it at once from truck to deck.

Men were washed overboard, boats were torn from their fastenings, bulwarks were battered in as though they had been built of lath, stout lanyards were bent and twisted like packthread, and the work of man, no matter how strong, was laughed to scorn by the battling elements.

The fore-mast was literally blown from its place, the mizzen was snapped asunder by the strain put upon it, the rudder was unshipped by a huge wave, and the ship, thrown upon her beam ends, seemed doomed to sudden and utter annihilation.

Captain, officers and men were killed by falling timbers, washed overboard or struck by lightning, until of all the crew of the Halcyon, there remained but the two boys and the second mate, one Matthew Raybury, a man of thirty-five.

The vessel righted, as if by a miracle, and the three, lashing themselves firmly to the spars and cross-trees of the main topmast which had fallen on deck, awaited the moment when they should have to trust to the mercy of the waves.

This moment was not long delayed, for in an hour from the bursting of the storm the ship had gone down, and they were floating upon the boundless ocean lashed to a frail raft which every wave submerged, and which might go to pieces at any moment.

For two days they floated, without water or provisions, till they were nearly frenzied with thirst and hunger, and then they floated in sight of a group of islands inhabited by a fierce race of men, to whom human life was as nothing.

They were the Marquesas Islands, in the Pacific, and the three castaways were picked up by the very fiercest tribe which inhabited them, the man-eating Typees, the deadly foes of both white strangers and the other natives, with whom they are at constant war.

Prisoners among savages, doomed to death, they knew not how soon, the position of the castaways was even worse than at the time of the wreck.

They were borne in triumph to the principal village of the Typees, where they were imprisoned in strong huts and left to meditate upon their impending fate.

The two boys were fastened together hand and foot, face to face, and thrown into a corner, but Rayburn was taken elsewhere, and for five or six days they saw nothing of him.

They were released but twice a day, to be fed, and then pinioned again, and this continued for nearly a week, when one day they were brought out into the open space in the middle of the village, where some great event seemed to be taking place.

They saw Rayburn bound to a post, set into the ground, several men seeming to be busy inspecting his right hand, for what purpose the boys could not tell.

"The wretches don't intend to eat me," he said, as the boys were led up to him, "for they have begun making a picture book of me, and if they keep on I will wish that they had, for the pain is frightful."

Upon this he held forth his right hand, which the Typees had released, and Noll uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

Well he might, for the man's hand was tattooed upon

both sides, from the tips of the fingers to the wrist, with a perfect maze of lines, the pattern of which Noll could not make out.

"Pretty, isn't it?" growled Rayburn. "That'll have to stay so now, for bad as it was to put in, it would be death to take it out. If I live through it I'll be one entire fresco of blue and red by the time they finish. They have started with a vine, and I suppose they'll run a tree down my back and legs, with a whole forest of twigs across my breast. That seems to be a favorite pattern with them."

"Do they intend to tattoo you from head to foot?"

"Yes, but you are to be fattened and eaten. By the Lord, I'd rather be in your place than to have nothing more than this tattooed hand, which makes me sick to look at. I never would mark myself in that way as many sailors do, but now I've got that which would make me known among a thousand."

"You don't care to be identified in that way, then?"

"No, I don't," and the man's brow darkened as though Ned's casual remark had awakened unpleasant memories.

CHAPTER II.

A SHIP TRACED IN THE SAND, AND WHAT IT MEANT.

After a slight pause, the savages were about to proceed with the tattooing, the victim being stripped for that purpose, when a terrible hubbub was heard upon the outskirts of the village.

First a horde of women and children came rushing in, uttering startled cries, and seeming to be dreadfully frightened at something.

Then all the dogs in the place set up a frightful howling and barking, as though pandemonium itself had broke loose.

Then came a swarm of boys from fourteen to sixteen years of age, clothed in little else than graceful tattoo marks, and then half a dozen older youths wearing loose breech-cloths about their loins, and carrying spears and clubs in their hands.

One of these spoke some excited words to the man most in authority in the square, and pointed towards the coast.

"What's up, I wonder?" said Noll to Ned.

"Don't know, unless a volcano has broken out."

More youths came up at this juncture, and, by the blood upon their garments and the spears in their hands, the boys guessed that some conflict had taken place.

These late comers all spoke at once, and gesticulated wildly, their pantomime expressing more to the boys than their speech could.

"There has been a fight," spoke up Noll, quickly, "and these young men have come for reinforcements."

"It appears to be still going on," added Ned, "if sounds tell anything; and look! Here come the invaders."

First, however, came a lot of men and youths, all evidently belonging to the Typees, and then through a defile in the distance appeared a vast number of men of another tribe.

"The Typees have been invaded by the men of Happar or Nukuheva," said Rayburn. "Probably those more peacefully disposed natives have grown tired of the incursions of these fiends, and have retaliated."

"Our captors are flying," cried Ned, a general stampede having now begun. "We shall be rescued."

"Only to be taken by another lot of wretches," returned Noll. "For my part, I don't see any benefit to be derived from the change."

"These others are not cannibals," interposed Rayburn, "and if these Typees leave us alone there is, indeed, a chance of our being restored to our homes."

The invading forces were now drawing nearer, and before them fled the Typees, many falling exhausted on the ground, and all seeming to be utterly heart-sick.

The enemy came in vast numbers, and from where they stood the captain could see the battle going on all around them.

The Typees had been completely surprised, and having no hope of regaining the lost ground, fled in all directions, only to be cut down and slaughtered by their relentless foes.

One of the Typees, in his mad haste to escape the death which threatened, came suddenly upon our friends.

He was evidently determined that the white prisoners should not escape, or fall into the hands of the enemy, for his face showed the utmost rage and hate.

Grasping his long, sharp-pointed spear in both hands, he ran at Rayburn with the evident intention of impaling him where he stood.

The man was still secured to the stake, but the two boys were free, having remained near Rayburn when the natives had fled.

Noll uttered a cry of alarm as he saw the savage rush upon his companion and look around for a weapon.

Ned had already found one in a heavy club dropped by one of the cannibals.

This he had seized in a trice, and as the savage approached, brandished it fiercely around his head.

The spear-point had almost touched the skin of the poor captive, when Ned leaped forward to the rescue and brought the club down on the cannibal.

The man dropped to the ground like a felled ox.

He was killed instantly, and lay without a motion.

"Bravo, Ned!" cried Noll. "You are a hero."

"You have saved my life, my boy," cried Rayburn, huskily, "and I shall never forget it."

Ah, how many times afterwards did those lying words come back to Noll in all their bitterness!

"Quick!" he cried; "we must not stay here—there will be more of these fellows coming presently."

"Don't leave me here," groaned Rayburn, in an agony of despair.

Better had it been for them if they had, but such was not their intention.

"No, no, we will not," cried Noll. "I am looking for a knife to cut your cords."

Ned soon found a sharp stone hatchet left by one of the flying natives, and with this he severed the bonds which secured Rayburn and helped him to resume his clothing.

"You shall have my gratitude as long as I live," said the man.

Could the boys have known what a black-hearted lie this was, and how soon the man would violate all his promises, they would have fled from him as they would from the plague.

Having assisted Rayburn, the three now set off together towards the most deserted part of the coast, having seen all they wished of the fight.

Suddenly, however, when they had gone but a few hundred yards, they were met by a large party of islanders, who came upon them all at once from around a bluff.

"We are lost," cried Noll.

"Not so," said Ned, quickly; "these men are not like our late captors."

They were not, in fact, but were a part of the host from the other side of the mountains.

They received the party with every demonstration of good will, making them understand by signs that they need fear nothing and that they would be well treated.

The boys and Rayburn went forward with these men, and presently they joined the main body of the attacking forces.

The enemy had been completely routed, with great loss of life, and the invaders, satisfied with what they had done, were now returning to their homes.

The Typee village was in flames, and many women and children were taken as captives, but not a man over eighteen had been spared that had been captured, all those being put to death and their bodies left behind.

There were many boys, handsome young fellows, from twelve to sixteen, but none older, a few girls, and some women, though not many, as these were as stern warriors as the men, and had fought as vindictively, many having been slain.

"Saved at last," muttered Rayburn as they took up the return march, "but look at that hand! If I don't lose it from inflammation it will be a pretty looking object all the rest of my life."

"Cannot the marks be taken out?" asked Noll.

"Not now; the wounds must heal first. The pain is frightful, and I would not undergo another operation for a fortune."

Early that evening they reached the house of the friendly natives on the other side of the mountains in a beautiful, fertile valley.

Here one of the women dressed Rayburn's hand with a poultice made of the bruised leaves of some plant whereby the pain was greatly allayed.

This treatment was repeated during three or four days, at the end of which time the cuts had closed and the hand began to heal rapidly.

In another week it was completely well, though covered with tattoo marks in blue and red, forming a most graceful pattern, if one could reconcile himself to the idea of having his hand ornamented in that fashion.

Rayburn was not one of that sort, however, and he kept his hand concealed except when it was impossible to do so, and even then hid it as much as he could.

One day, however, Noll came upon him in his hut fast asleep, and had a fair opportunity to examine his hand, which, hanging over the end of a couch, was exposed to view on both sides.

Upon the back, starting from the wrist as a base, was a vine, curving gracefully over the hand and sending out shoots to the ends of each of the five fingers.

Branches, twigs, leaves, tendrils and fruit were most delicately traced, every line being clear and distinct, and standing apart from every other.

The greatest skill had been displayed in this work, and it was really a most beautiful tracing, although one might not fancy having it upon the back of his hand.

Upon the inside of the fingers were arabesques most delicately traced in red, while on the palm was a group of animals, small, but well outlined, standing in graceful positions in a landscape of spreading palms, with mountains at one side and the rolling sea upon the other, the thumb being occupied by the graceful figure of a male native in all his natural beauty of form, with a tuft of feathers on his head and a spear in his hand.

"Well," muttered Noll, as he left the place, his inspection having been finished, "one is not likely to forget a hand so marked. I doubt if there is another white man in the whole world that can show its like."

How many times thereafter was the image of that tattooed hand to come before him, never to be effaced from his memory!

During their stay among the islanders the three casta-

ways were treated with the utmost kindness, but nevertheless they longed for home, and when one evening one of the native boys came in and drew the figure of a ship upon the sandy floor of the hut where the two boys lived together, their excitement knew no bounds.

"The figure of a ship in the sand," cried Ned, excitedly. "The boy has seen one, and it is even now perhaps in the bay beyond."

"Whalers come here sometimes," answered Noll, "and doubtless one has now put in and will take us off. Let us hasten to the shore."

A few minutes later they were standing on the beach, and there indeed, at anchor in the roadstead without, glorified by the moonlight, was the welcome object of which the native boy had traced an outline in the sand.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT NOLL SAW BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON.

"A ship, indeed!" cried Ned, "and see, a boat is coming to take us off. Let us hurry back to the village and tell Rayburn."

"Let us wait here," suggested Noll; "the same native who made the ship in the sand for us will doubtless tell him as well."

Then they sat down on a mossy bank in front of a clump of bushes, and began watching the ship and the boat with its sturdy seamen, as it danced over the sparkling waves.

Truly, never was there a more welcome sight, and the boys could scarcely take their eyes off it."

"Now we will get away, make our way to Guyaquil, find this treasure by means of my chart and secret writing, and then go home rich."

"Is the writing in cipher?"

"Yes, but I have the key with me, and that is inclosed in my will. I tell you, Noll, we shall be rich."

"What is the value of this treasure?"

"More than a hundred thousand pounds. You see, it was the combined fortunes of five or six men, and now it is all ours, for you shall share with me, Noll."

"And you are confident of finding it?"

"There can be no doubt of that. I have all the points of the compass, all the distances from certain places, all the landmarks, mountains, and such things likely to be there yet, and every information I want all marked down upon my diagram, with the most minute instructions."

"It is fortunate that you preserved them so well."

"They have never left my possession, and carefully wrapped up as they are in a double envelope of oiled silk, nothing could injure them. The packet was as dry after our long stay in the water that fearful night as when I first received it."

"Have you other relatives besides your grandfather, Ned?"

"Why do you ask?"

"If he should be dead when you return, as is possible, being such an old man, how would you be identified?"

"Why, don't you know that all that has been provided for? My papers will prove everything, and they must be produced, with this treasure, before I can touch anything. In case of my death the will leaves you all these papers. I was careful about that, so that this money might not be scattered."

"But if some one else were to get possession of them? Could they not gain this wealth?"

"Why, old fellow, what put that into your head? I know that you would not take advantage of me, and no one else knows our secret."

No one had known it until that time, but now it was in the possession of a man who would not scruple to use it to his advantage.

That man was Matthew Rayburn, who, concealed behind the mass of shrubbery already spoken of, had heard every word which passed between the two lads.

That man had made up his mind to possess, not only the secrets but the riches of the two boys, at whatever risk!

He had been on his way to the shore, having guessed that there was a ship in sight, when, hearing the boys approaching, he had concealed himself, not knowing but that the newcomers were hostile natives.

When he discovered the truth he would have revealed himself, had not the words let fall by Ned aroused his greed and awakened within him a desire to possess the treasure, at the sacrifice, if need be, of these two young lives, and more, should they be required.

With what feverish excitement he listened to the telling of the secret writing, of the provisions of the will, and of the amount of the treasure!

With what eagerness he listened to every detail; how he chuckled when every objection or suggestion made by Noll was met and answered clearly; with what greedy lust he yearned to lay his hand upon the hidden wealth, and call it all his own!

The demon of avarice had taken full possession of his heart, and now nothing, not even murder itself, would stop him from gaining his ignoble ends.

Not a word, not a syllable, of that conversation did he miss, but drinking in everything with eager anxiety, began already to form his plans for accomplishing his baleful purpose.

Here were two boys opposed to him, a man, among a

lot of savages or half-civilized natives, and no one to witness the crimes he might commit.

To the men of the ship he would say that he was alone; to the natives, that his companions had gone aboard the ship, and thus no suspicions would be aroused.

Were the boys missed after getting on the vessel, he might be suspected of their murder, but if nothing was known of them beforehand, nothing could be suspected thereafter.

Yes, whatever was to be done must be done at once.

To be sure, you would have nothing to fear from me," replied Noll to his chum's last remark; "but I was thinking of what might happen if some one else were to know of the matter."

"No one does, old fellow, and this treasure shall belong to you and me alone."

"Not if I know it!" was suddenly hissed behind the shrubbery, and Rayburn appeared before them.

"He has heard all!" was Noll's muttered ejaculation.

"Yes, and the treasure shall be mine. Give me those papers."

"Never!" answered Ned, stoutly.

"Then I shall take them from you, if it costs you your life!"

Noll quickly sprung before his friend, and with no weapons but his naked fists, put himself upon the defensive, and cried:

"Stand off! If this is a joke, I can't see it, and if it is not you will find us ready for you."

"Joke!" hissed Rayburn. "You will find that it is no joke, indeed. Give me the papers, I say. I am not to be trifled with."

With this he drew from behind him a heavy cudgel and raised his arm as if to strike.

The moonlight fell upon his tattooed hand, and its image was again most forcibly impressed upon the boy's memory.

"Man, man, have you no gratitude?" he cried. "Ned Singleton has twice saved your life, and you have sworn never to forget it while you lived."

Rayburn laughed scornfully and advanced upon the defiant lad.

Poor Ned, though naturally brave, stood transfixed with fear or amazement, it would be hard to say which, and appeared incapable of moving a muscle.

"Stand back, I say!" commanded Noll, "or I will call to the men in the boat. Help there, I say! hel——"

With a frightful oath that might have made the arch fiend himself turn pale, the murderous-minded man sprang upon Noll and struck him a blow.

The boy fell to the ground, stunned, though not unconscious, and at the next instant Rayburn had leaped upon Ned.

Raising upon his elbows, unable to drag himself along, dazed and yet frightfully awake to all that was going on, Noll bent forward and beheld by the clear light of the moon the whole awful tragedy.

He saw a keen, glittering knife upheld for an instant by the tattooed hand of the monster, upon whose face was an expression of the deadliest hate.

He saw him seize Ned by the throat, saw the terror depicted upon his fair face, saw the knife descend, heard his poor friend's awful shriek of agony.

Horrified beyond measure, he overcame his gathering stupor, staggered to his feet and tottered forward.

Ned was lying upon his back, with the moon bathing his pale face with its silvery beams.

Rayburn was kneeling above him, and he had torn away the boy's shirt in his search for the precious packet.

One glance at the upturned face of his friend assured Noll that life was extinct, that what he had vaguely feared was accomplished, and that he was deprived of the only friend he had in the world.

Rayburn was making diligent search for the coveted packet when Noll fell rather than sprang forward, exclaiming:

"Monster, villain, ingrate! You have killed him; do not now add robbery to your other crimes."

As he spoke Rayburn found the packet, and held it aloft in the moonbeams.

"This gives me gold, wealth beyond my maddest hopes!" he cried. "I shall be richer than an emperor! Do you think one paltry life is to stand between me and such a prospect? No, no, I would slay hundreds to accomplish my end."

"Demon!" screamed Noll, "you shall not succeed. I will hold you here till help comes. Ahoy there! Help, help, for the love of Heaven——"

"Blame him!" hissed Rayburn. "He, too, must die or I am ruined!"

Then thrusting the stolen documents into his breast, he seized the club, having dropped the knife, and struck Noll a fearful blow, which deprived him of all sense, and stretched him out upon the sand by the side of his murdered companion.

"Both dead!" whispered the murderer, looking fixedly into the two young, upturned faces. "Fools! they should not have opposed my will."

Then he swept a hurried glance along the shore and noticed that the boat had come to land, and that the men were drawing it upon the beach.

"These bodies must not be left here," he muttered, husk-

ily, "and yet I must get aboard that ship. I must dispose of them at once."

Without further ado he picked up all that remained of poor Ned Singleton and hurried with it to the mouth of a little creek where the waters ran with great violence into the sea.

Lifting it above his head, he threw the body far from him into the waters, which took it instantly and bore it from sight.

Nevermore did it come to land.

Poor Ned! his sparkling, blue eyes were closed forever, his merry laugh forever hushed, his warm heart, which had beaten only in friendship, stilled forever, while out toward the great sea, as toward the sea of utter forgetfulness, drifted his body, to be seen, to be remembered nevermore!

CHAPTER IV.

"I WILL HUNT HIM DOWN."

Having put the body of his poor victim where it would never more accuse him, Rayburn began to retrace his steps in order to dispose of Noll in a similar way.

He did not doubt the lad was dead, but whether he was or not would make no difference, for the body must not be found there, either by the strangers or the natives, who had become greatly attached to the lad.

He had almost reached the spot where he had committed his horrid crime, when he heard footsteps approaching, and saw a party of the strangers drawing near.

Quickly plunging through the underbrush, he came upon them before they could see the tell-tale sight of his victim's body, and quickly throwing himself before them, cried:

"Thank Heaven! I am saved at last! Fly from this place, for the treacherous natives have attacked us and I have barely saved my life."

The men appeared greatly surprised, and one of them, evidently the leader, approached and addressed him in a strange tongue.

"I do not understand," said Rayburn, a wild hope filling his breast; "can no one here speak English?"

"No Inglese—speaka Portuguese," said the man. "No 'stand Inglese."

"Then if they heard the boys' cries for help they could not understand them," muttered the murderer. "I am safe, but they must not stay here."

Then he dragged the Portuguese several steps away, and in most expressive pantomime pointed to the blood on his hands and clothing, and made the men to understand that he had been attacked by the natives.

The man knew well that this part of the islands was occupied by the peaceful tribes, but thinking perhaps that the Typees had made one of their periodical incursions, believed Rayburn, and urged his companions to make haste and leave the place at once.

To further urge them away, a large party of the natives now appeared not far away, coming toward them with torches, and making a great noise with drums and cymbals.

This was really their method of welcoming the strangers, but Rayburn showed the utmost terror, repeated his pantomime, and seemed so anxious to get away that the Portuguese was confirmed in his former belief, and called upon his followers to get away from the island before it was too late.

This they did, and to the surprise of the kindly-disposed natives, they saw the men whom they had intended to welcome and treat with betaking themselves to speedy flight.

They came running down to the beach with the intention of showing their good feeling, but Rayburn only urged the men the faster, and in a few moments the boat was reached and shoved out into the surf, the men springing in with all possible haste.

The disappointed natives shook their weapons at the retreating boat and vented their displeasure in loud cries, which the sailors took for threats, and consequently redoubled their efforts to get away.

Rayburn was not fully at his ease until the ship had weighed her anchor, and, under full sail, was speeding away towards another island of the group, where they would meet with a better reception.

On the ship he encountered a man who could speak English, and to him he told a dreadful story of how he and several companions had been wrecked upon this very island and been found by the natives, who at first treated them kindly only to allay their suspicions, and had then fallen upon and murdered all of the party but himself.

He drew such a frightful picture of the danger of falling into the hands of the islanders that the man believed him, and translated his story to his comrades, so that all became impressed with the danger they had so narrowly escaped.

Away they went, therefore, and when they did land, for the purpose of taking in water, they did not expose themselves to any unnecessary danger and got off again as soon as possible.

From the English-speaking sailor Rayburn learned that the vessel was bound for Callao, thence to the Sandwich Islands and China, and lastly to Australia, and around by the Cape of Good Hope to Lisbon, where she had been fitted out.

"Then Callao is my stopping-place," he said to himself, "and hence to find this treasure, to become rich, to enter

the world of fashion, and bring its haughty leaders to my feet. Success awaits you, Matthew Rayburn! Advance boldly and win it!"

* * * * * *

Let us return to Noll, whom we saw stretched senseless upon the ground after the murderous attack upon him by Rayburn.

He was not dead, as the man supposed, but only badly stunned, so that he remained unconscious for more than an hour.

At last he revived, with a dreadful pain in his head, and getting upon his feet with difficulty, looked around him in a bewildered way, as if striving to collect his senses.

For a moment he could not tell where he was or what had happened, all recollection of the frightful scene through which he had passed seeming to have departed.

Presently he saw, far away in the distance, lit by the pale rays of the moon, the faint outlines of a ship under full sail.

Then the memory of what had happened began to return, and he pressed his head wearily with his hands, and strove to gether up his wandering thoughts.

He took a few steps, when his foot struck against some object which glittered in the moonlight.

He stooped down and picked it up, and then a flood of recollection swept over his mind, and he cried:

"It is his knife."

Then glancing at the fast receding ship, he shook his first, clenching the knife in it, and cried, hoarsely:

"Aye! go on your way, and bear the villain far away, but even if you take him to the furthest corner of the earth I will track him out, and dearly avenge this night's dreadful work."

Then, somewhat subdued, he began searching for the body of his comrade, but found no traces of it, except the blood upon the sand and grass.

Up and down he went for some distance, but could not find the least trace of what he sought.

Nor would he ever find it, for the waves had now carried it far away, and it was destined no more to be seen, but would ere long find a resting place beneath the sea, there to await the last judgment.

Returning to the spot where he had fallen, Noll was attracted by a fluttering paper which the freshening breeze was tossing to and fro, and which presently fell at his feet.

Stooping down, without even a thought of what this stray thing was, he turned it so that the light of the moon would shine upon it.

After a hasty glance, he suddenly uttered a cry of astonishment.

"Heaven preserve me!" he whispered. "There is some strange providence in this!"

The paper was Ned Singleton's will!

Rayburn had found it while engaged in the search for the papers relating to the buried treasure, and had thrown it contemptuously aside as a thing of no value.

To Noll its worth was inestimable.

"Poor Ned," he murmured huskily, "this is all of you that remains to me; this bit of paper is all by which I may be reminded of our previous companionship, of your beloved face and form, of the many happy times we have had together."

Folding the paper carefully, he placed it in a place of security, and then tapping the hilt of Rayburn's knife, now resting in his belt, he muttered to himself, gazing out to sea:

"This knife and the will of my poor Ned are all I have to work with for vengeance, but I have also a stout heart, youth and health, a will to do and dare, and the right upon my side. Years may pass, but some time, though I be even upon the verge of the grave, I will avenge this poor boy's death and bring his murderer to justice!"

Then kneeling upon the sand and stretching his arms toward the sky, the light of the moon shedding a luster over his dark hair and swarthy complexion, he cried in hoarse tones:

"By the sky above me, by the sea which brought me to this strange land, by the winds which now bear away the murderer, by all that is good and pure, I swear to avenge Ned's cruel death and to find his murderer and bring him to the ground, though his ill-gotten gains may have placed him on a throne as high as Haman's gallows!"

There was little doubt that the boy would keep this oath, for he had that in him which neither time nor distance, nor dangers, nor obstacles could subdue, and though years, decades, generations even, might pass, he would not give up his task while life remained.

"Let this be my life-work," he mused, as he walked slowly away from the sad spot. "By Heaven! I have one sure clew to aid me! The tattooed hand! Can I ever forget it?"

It was not likely, indeed.

"Now, even should he change himself from one appearance to another like Proteus, still will I know him. He cannot wash out the tracings upon that blood-stained hand, nor can that ever be effaced from my memory. Now let my search begin for the man with the tattooed hand, and though oceans may roll between us, I shall find him yet!"

And, as he passed the succeeding weeks in devising the means of getting away from his island home, now grown so hateful to him, over the sea went the man with that strangely marked hand, till he came to the land of silver, and of the treasure-houses of a race of kings long since dead and forgotten.

In time, behold both these persons, one a prisoner on an island far away in the sea, the other a man rolling in wealth, his ill-gotten gains doubling and trebling until his former dreams of wealth seem but as the trivial wishes of a child.

CHAPTER V.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

Ten years have passed away since the night on which Noll Sturtevant swore to avenge the murder of his friend, and he is still a dweller among the islanders of the Marquesas group.

He has learned their different dialects, and is regarded with great favor among them, though watched with jealous care lest he should escape.

Several times he has led them in battle against their inveterate enemies—the Typees—and always with success; so that now he is like a great prince among them, and regarded as a little less than a god by many of them.

Ships stop in the bay sometimes, but Noll is always prevented from visiting them, and at last he has grown sick at heart, and regards himself as but a prisoner among the people who love him so well, and among whom it seems that his lot is to be cast forever.

He is as olive-skinned as any of them now from constant exposure to the sun; but not a single tattoo-mark disfigures his face or form, his wishes in that regard being religiously complied with.

He is as strong and sinewy as a Hercules, can run like a deer, swim and dive with the best of them all, and has a constitution like steel, which nothing, not even the fretting of his proud heart to get away from his prison, can break down.

He has sworn to accomplish his purpose, though years shall pass away, though thousands of miles shall separate him and the murderer, though obstacles of all sorts shall stand between him and his vow, and he is not likely to be discouraged because ten years have passed without his having taken the first step.

He has grown used to delay, he has hardened his heart and his constitution, he has inured himself to privation, he has learned to be patient, and all these things shall tell in his favor when the real battle begins.

Noll was now a splendid diver and swimmer, and would often go down thirty or forty fathoms deep, by means of a heavy stone fastened about his feet, and search around among the sunken rocks for three or four minutes at a time, and then, releasing the weight, shoot to the surface again, and after a short breathing spell, return to the water.

Many a fierce battle had he engaged in with the fierce denizens of the deep, many a monstrous shark had he ripped open with his knife, and once he had been caught in the fatal embrace of a huge devil-fish, and only saved himself by the utmost coolness and courage.

He would sometimes fasten an oiled sponge before his mouth, and at a moderate depth remain under water, looking for pearls and such like treasures for five or six minutes together, his submarine journeys being oftentimes rewarded by pearls of great size and value, though to the unsophisticated islanders they were merely petty things to look at and adorn the hair of the native beauties, all of whom would have liked Noll for a husband.

One day, about the time when we again take up the thread of our story, Noll went to a greater depth than usual, and at a point where he had never been before except on very rare occasions, owing to the receding depth of the sea at this point. When he reached the bottom he suddenly saw before him the open mouth of a deep cavern which he had never before noticed, and clustered around this, upon the jagged rocks, were some pearl oysters of immense size.

With his sharp knife he hurriedly detached half a dozen of the largest of these and dropped them into a leather bag at his side.

With one of these came a piece of the rock, but this went into the bag with the rest, as there was no time to detach it.

Having stayed already almost beyond his limit, he knocked off three or four more shells, and letting go the stone, about which was securely fastened a rope made of goat's leather, tough and strong, he ascended to the surface.

Examining his treasures, he found three pearls of immense size in the shells, and others running about the size of extra-large peas.

"By Jove! what a find!" he exclaimed. "A necklace of gems like these would be worth a fortune. These shall not adorn the necks of the dusky beauties of the Marquesas. One day I shall want these jewels, and any judge will give me a good price for them."

Happening to look at the bit of rock upon one of the shells he turned it over, examining it carefully, and suddenly cried:

"There is a deposit of copper upon this stone, and that is why the pearls are so large. I have heard that pearl-divers often leave bits of copper among their pearl oyster beds in order to increase the size of the jewels. Can it be——"

He suddenly paused, while a flood of strange thoughts

rushed over him, and sent the blood flushing to the very roots of his hair.

"Perhaps a ship has been sunk here," he suddenly cried, "and the copper upon her keel and sides has caused this deposit. The green tinge on that stone can only mean——"

He said no more, but hauling up the weight from the bottom, prepared himself with extra care for his dive, and again sought the lower depths of the sea.

He found the cave again, and detached a bag full of the largest oysters and was about to return, when a sudden ray of light showed him a strange figure seemingly advancing upon him.

It was a skeleton, which the motion imparted to the waves by Noll's movement had disturbed, and which was now floating toward him.

Noll struck at the grizzly object before he recognized it, and it fell all to pieces, and as he retreated, his foot was placed upon some object, evidently not a stone, which yielded under the pressure.

It gave way under his weight, and thinking that he might have stepped upon some huge crab or shell-fish, which would seize his foot and detain him, he quickly reached down and struck the object a blow with his knife.

There was no resistance, and he felt his hand buried in a mass of hard, round and flat substances which greatly puzzled him.

Seizing a handful of these, he returned to the surface, having been gone a much longer time than usual.

When he reached the top he scrambled out and stretched himself upon the bank, where he lay some time before examining his treasures.

At last he arose and began looking over his new batch of pearl oysters, when his eye suddenly fell upon the strange objects he had brought up in his hand, now lying in a little depression in the rock, and covered with water to the depth of an inch or so.

As he gazed upon them his heart seemed to leap into his mouth.

"Gold pieces! Spanish doubloons!" he cried, catching them up. "There is a wreck down there—that skeleton, the cave, these coins—that was a box or chest which I stepped upon—beneath my feet lies a vast treasure, mine for seeking, all mine!"

There were half a dozen of the pieces, and they were but little tarnished after their long stay in the water, where they must have remained for many years.

Procuring a larger leather bag—for Noll was always well supplied upon these expeditions of his—the young man fastened it securely about his neck and waist, the mouth being on a level with his armpits, provided himself with another rope, for he did not want to disturb the position of the stone he had left below.

He easily found a stone sufficiently heavy to carry him down to the proper depth, and then securing the end of the first rope about a huge bowlder, took the cord in his hands to serve him as a guide, and disappearing beneath the water, quickly glided to the bottom.

Finding the broken chest, which he now easily recognized as such, he filled his leather bag with double handfuls of the precious coins, and, casting off his weight, slowly rose to the surface.

When he again stood upon the flat rock he poured out his treasures in a glittering heap, and fairly feasted his eyes upon them.

"There remains as many more below," he cried, "and here already is the value of many thousands of dollars. Should there prove to be a treasure ship below there—and many Spanish vessels laden with fabulous wealth have gone down in these very waters—I shall be rich beyond my wildest hopes.

"And I want wealth, for it is the most potent weapon I can have to wield against this villain. It is good fortune that has sent me this treasure, and if need be, every ounce of it shall be used to cause the ruin of this murderer, who no doubt, rolling in opulence, fancies that vengeance is dead, and that never more will he be disturbed. Now I have gold wherewith to fight him, and the rest will follow shortly!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE TREASURE SHIP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

By the time Noll had made half a dozen more visits to the chest of gold he had exhausted its contents, and his strength as well, and resolved to let matters rest for the day.

The gold lay piled deep over the surface of the rock in glittering heaps, and, as Noll looked at it, his were not the feelings of a miser, but rather those of a man battling against odds with a fierce foe, and who has found a weapon long sought with which to conquer his enemy.

"Now I am rich!" he cried, "and this must be but the smallest part of that which remains behind. It all shall be mine, and then for freedom and the beginning of a struggle for vengeance!"

At a rough calculation Noll estimated that the contents of the chest would amount to at least twenty thousand dollars, and that, beyond a doubt, there must be much more aboard the ship.

That there was a ship below there he never questioned, for the copper deposit upon the rocks, the presence of the skeleton and of the chest, all tended to that belief, besides

many other discoveries which he had made while going and coming during his frequent trips to and from the bed of the ocean that day.

Once he had come upon an object which, upon taking to the surface and examining, he found to be an old Spanish musket, very rusty, very much dilapidated, and thickly encrusted with coral and other marine formations.

Its form and use were easily determined, however, and this was another link in the chain of evidence which proved to him that a vessel had sunk at or near this spot.

That the vessel was an old Spanish treasure ship he never doubted, and he determined to give himself up to the task of discovering it; exploring it from stem to stern, and wresting from it the wealth which the sea had so long held in its cold grasp.

He would do no more that day, however, and finding a snug hole in the rocks, he hid the gold where it would be safe from the prying eyes of the islanders, for although they could not know its value, they might be tempted by its glitter and beauty to appropriate a large portion of it to the decoration of the persons of themselves and their olive-skinned wives and daughters.

"Chains, necklaces and bracelets of linked doubloons might certainly dazzle the eyes and take the fancy of the island beauties, but brass or pretty shells would serve as well," thought Noll, "and I have no notion of furnishing them with such valuable ornaments."

Having deposited the gold in a safe place, Noll returned to the village, where his long absence had not been especially noticed, it being his frequent custom to be away all day.

That night he determined to set about the work of discovering the whereabouts of the ship and of removing the treasure which he knew it must contain at as early a day as possible, spending the intervening time in preparation.

He therefore began the next day to make an apparatus which would enable him to remain longer under the water, for at present he labored under a great disadvantage in being obliged to come so often to the surface.

He contrived, in the course of a day or so, a large helmet made of the shells of cocoanuts cemented together with a kind of native gum impervious to water, with which he also coated the outside of his novel head-piece.

The helmet would go over his head, completely enveloping it, and joined to it was a sort of shirt made of the knitted fiber of the cocoanut husk, which he also made water-tight and close-fitting.

His helmet, being quite large, would hold a quantity of air sufficient to last him some time; but it must have places for the eyes, and these he had provided.

There were two large, round apertures on either side and another in front, as in a diver's helmet, and over these, so as to keep out the water, Noll had stretched a fine, tough, parchment-like material made from the intestines of animals, which he oiled until it was well-nigh transparent and allowed him to see things placed in front with uncommon distinctness.

His eye-holes were not so good as glass ones would have been, certainly, but they served, and Noll had to make the best of the materials placed to his hand.

There must be some means of letting the vitiated air out of his helmet, even if he could not let in a fresh supply, and this had also to be provided for.

Taking the stem of a large, pliant vine, half an inch in diameter, he had removed the pith so as to form a hollow tube, and this, flexible as well as tough, made an excellent tube for carrying off the bad air.

The large end of this he introduced into the helmet, making it fast inside by means of gum which he hardened with fine sand until it was like glass, and then trained it over the shoulders and down the back of his shirt, fastening it securely at various points, the end being turned up and stiffened so as to look like the tail of some strange animal, but ending in a funnel-shaped aperture, through which the air might escape, and yet into which the water might not penetrate, on account of the pressure above.

With the addition of light drawers of native cloth and shoes of fiber, the soles being remarkably heavy and thick, in order to protect his feet, Noll's diving dress was complete, but as he had no lead wherewith to weight his shoes, he was forced to stick to the primitive mode of fastening a heavy stone to them.

When he was all ready he made several additional lengths of rope, upon the ends of which he had placed a sort of net or strong cord basket, into which he could place whatever he desired to take up, and then, when he reached the top again, he could draw up all his lines, thus saving many extra trips to the bottom.

There was one thing the loss of which Noll felt keenly, and that was light, which he could not carry down with him, and for which he had to depend entirely on circumstances.

At an ordinary depth, upon a bright, clear day, he would have as much light as he needed, for the sun's rays are capable of penetrating beneath the water to a considerable depth, but the place where he was at work was quite deep, and unless the sun shone very brightly the light afforded him was little better than a dull twilight, and even this he could not control or take where he wished.

In penetrating the hold of the vessel, therefore, provided he found it, he would have to work in the dark, which would be greatly to his disadvantage, but as he was used to meeting with obstacles he determined to make the best of his circumstances.

Having made himself all ready for his explorations beneath the sea, Noll went to his rock early one morning, and laying his lines on the shore put on his diving dress, seized his guiding rope, and slipping into the water sank quickly to the bottom.

He looked around for the cave, but could not seem to find it, and groping about soon discovered that the line ran below him, and that he was standing upon some sort of prominence.

This might be a ledge of rock above the cave entrance, although by the light afforded him Noll saw that it was of considerable extent, sloping downward upon one side.

He ascended the slope, and presently came upon some obstruction which seemed to extend for some distance like a low wall.

He walked along this a few yards, and then, striking out at right angles, descended the slope until he brought up at a similar obstruction upon the other side.

Then he walked ahead for another few yards, until he was met by a sort of natural step in the rock.

Suddenly the truth burst upon him like a flood of light.

He was not standing upon a ledge of rock at all.

He was upon the deck of a sunken ship!

The obstructions he had met with were portions of the rail.

The step was the rise of the forecastle deck.

Seizing the rope once more, he followed it, leaped over the low wall, and stood before the entrance of the cave, as he had all along taken it to be.

It was not a cave at all, but a hole in the side of the ship caused by her having struck upon a rock, a part of which still formed one side of the entrance to the hold, which he had imagined was a cave.

He had come upon the ship at first without knowing it.

CHAPTER VII.

ROBBING THE SEA OF ITS TREASURES

By this time Noll had tested his apparatus sufficiently to know that it would serve all the purposes for which it was intended, the air in his reservoir being as yet not half exhausted, and the difficulty experienced in breathing but slight.

He could see almost as plainly as without his helmet, besides being free from the discomfort of having the water pressing directly upon his eyes, though this was a matter to which he had become greatly accustomed from force of habit.

Knowing now that his cave was the entrance to the hold—and this fully explained the presence of the skeleton and of the chest, and confirmed his belief that there were more riches to be found beyond—he advanced boldly within the entrance and looked about him.

The light did not penetrate far, but in the portion of the hold which was made visible, he saw a pile of chests similar to that which he had already discovered.

Quickly advancing to the pile he seized the uppermost one and overturned it, the sides and lid falling apart and a glittering mass of gold showered down at his feet.

As he stooped to fill his pouch from the precious heap he was conscious of the presence of some dread object in the hold with him.

Fearing that some monster of the deep—a shark, maybe—had followed or preceded him, he quickly retreated towards the entrance.

The thing, whatever it was, came toward him, and for an instant he was in an agony of fear, for he felt his supply of fresh air was giving out, and that if he were obliged to remain and fight this new enemy the delay would be fatal.

As he reached the outer water, however, the object which had followed him was revealed.

It was another skeleton, disturbed by the agitation of the waters caused by Noll's movements.

Our hero felt greatly relieved at this discovery, but he could stay below no longer with safety, and casting off his weights, the stones being secured to his belt by looped cords passed around them, he seized the rope and shot upwards, greatly delighted at the progress he had made.

He had established the location of the ship and of a portion of the treasure contained in its hold—sufficient to keep him busy in removing it for some time—and he could now rest awhile from his labors with perfect assurance of safety.

He removed his helmet so as to let in a full supply of air, for he did not as yet have his apparatus so arranged as to refill it without taking off his helmet, and after filling his lungs several times and getting up a glow all over his body, once more put on his harness, and this time taking his lines and baskets with him, descended to the bottom.

He had been careful to line some of the baskets with leather so as to permit of the carrying of small objects like loose coins without spilling or losing, and these he filled first from the contents of the second chest.

The next one that he broke open was similarly filled, as were two or three others, but the second from the bottom, on one of the tiers, had in it bars of metal instead of coin.

This was a great discovery, and Noll quickly filled his baskets with all that they would hold, and then quickly dragging them outside, re-entered and made an examination of the remaining chests disposed in that portion of the hold which was reached by the light from above.

Some of these contained ingots of silver as well as of gold, and filling his arms with these he piled them up just outside, and returned two or three times for more until at last the state of the air in his helmet warned him that he must no longer remain.

Leaving the ingots until he should return he presently reached the top, and after removing his helmet and breathing in the pure air, set about fishing up his treasures from below.

There were a dozen of the baskets, and he had to be careful in drawing them up so they might not break with the weight they contained when they ceased to be buoyed up by the water.

They proved to be heavier than he had fancied, but Noll was possessed of great strength, acquired by his vigorous, outdoor life, and his nets and lines were made sufficiently strong to enable him with a little care to land his strange fish without loss or damage.

The drawing up of the lines, and the subsequent emptying of the baskets, required fully an hour's time, but when it was over the young avenger looked upon his scores of thousands of dollars, wrested from the sea and all his, given to use in his work of vengeance.

"That's very good," mused the young man, "but my work may require millions, and I must not stop until I have exhausted the treasure-house."

Upon his next expedition he cleaned away all the chests in the light, putting their contents in his net, and then, penetrating deeper into the hold, found two or three small chests, which seemed to be of iron, and with them in his arms he groped his way outside.

Fastening one of the lines to these, he left one of the baskets of ingots behind and returned to the surface.

When he had brought up the chests he found the locks and hinges so rusted and eaten away that it required but a strong tug to rip away the lids.

In the first which he thus treated was a layer of silk or linen at the top, but so badly decomposed that it came away in shreds in his hands.

Kneeling before the chest he tore away the rubbish and brought up in his hand something which glittered and shone like liquid fire.

He could not repress a cry of delight, for he had brought out a superb necklace of diamonds, all large and of the first water, their long sojourn beneath the sea having in no wise impaired their value.

How the gems sparkled and flashed in the sunlight, how the colors changed, how the light shifted from one point to another as the finder moved his hand.

Such a necklace could be worth at least five thousand dollars alone, and the iron chest was full of jewels equally as costly.

"It is fit for an empress!" exclaimed Noll, as he dove his hand into the strong box, which was about eighteen by ten inches in measurement and nearly a foot deep.

Two other necklaces of diamonds, dazzlingly beautiful, but not as costly as the first, bracelets studded with rubies and emeralds, richly jeweled brooches and strings upon strings of heavy gold beads were in the chest, the bottom being filled to the depth of an inch with unset gems, consisting of amethysts, garnets, rubies and emeralds.

"Here is a small fortune in itself," murmured our hero, "and now for the other casket."

In this he found what had once been a magnificent pearl necklace, but the action of the water had impaired its value so that in a connoisseur's eyes it was worth but little.

"Never mind," said Noll, "I have as handsome pearls as these, and even better, for there are none of these as large as mine."

There were numerous strings of pearls in the casket, all valuable now, but at the bottom was a superb necklace of great weight composed of rubies, emeralds and diamonds, made in the shape of a wreath of roses, the rubies and diamonds forming the flowers, and the emeralds the leaves.

The cutting, setting, luster and brilliancy had been no way impaired, the gold being as untarnished as when it was first wrought.

"That's a beauty!" cried Noll, in ecstasy, "worth seven or eight thousand dollars if it's worth a cent. I am a rich man, but I must not stop yet, for there must be as much more wealth down there yet, and I have need of all of it."

The next two trips were employed in bringing up the stuff which he had piled up outside, and which cleaned away all that portion of the hold reached by the light.

Then hiding away his treasures in the place already found, he concluded to stop for the day, and putting his diving dress in a safe place he donned his ordinary clothing, and slipping the pearls and one or two strings of gold beads into his pocket, returned to his rude dwelling.

The day was now well-nigh spent, and he had had nothing to eat since morning, so rapidly had the time flown and so deeply engaged had he been in his work.

One of the princesses, seeing his fatigue, brought him some nourishing food and asked him where he had been.

For reply he threw the largest of the pearl necklaces about her neck, and she, dazzled by its still remaining beauty, was fairly enraptured.

To her maidens he presented sleek laces and strings of pearls, and before long he was besieged by all the pretty young women in the place for presents, a gift from him being regarded with more esteem than from any one else.

Every good looking girl was supplied with a string of pearls, large or small, and they were all as happy as could be, regarding a gift from the sad, young stranger, as they

called him, as an object of especial reverence, not to say a charm against all danger and misfortune.

When the women had all departed, Noll threw the strings of heavy gold beads over the shapely shoulders of the princess, and said:

"Wear these for my sake, lovely being. Have you ever seen their like?"

"Where did you get them?" she cried with the delight of a child.

"In the sea, and there are more there still which the water spirits have given me."

"And you will give me some?" she cried lovingly, throwing her arms caressingly about his neck, for she was a privileged person, this dusky maiden.

"Yes, but you must assist me."

"Noll knows that Ayama is his slave, that she adores the ground he treads upon, that she would do anything for him."

"Listen," said Noll, gravely. "I am sick at heart and weary of this beautiful place, and of all the kindnesses I have received, for far away beyond this blue sea is my home, to which I long to return."

"You would not leave her who loves you?"

"No, no, but I must see my home once more or I shall die and you will love me forever. Your people want me here, but I tell you, my love, that I am dying for the sight of my beloved land. Help me to get away and I will fill your house with these pretty things.

"If Noll goes away, Ayama will go with him, far, far away beyond the place where the sky kisses the water."

"Anything," cried Noll; "I promise you whatever you may ask."

"Then the sad young stranger shall return to his beloved island and no one shall prevent him."

"Good! I rely upon you, my girl, to keep your promise.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPERIMENTS OF AN AMATEUR ENGINEER.

Having determined upon leaving the island, at whatever hazard, the means for so doing seemed to come at once, or rather, assistance furthering that end was not wanting.

On the day following his interview with Ayama a fierce storm arose which lasted for three days.

Upon the last a vessel was down upon the rocks not far from where Noll had been at work, and every soul had perished.

He tried in vain to save them, but the few that had been already spared—the vessel having evidently been in great distress—were cast into the mad waters or tossed upon the jagged rocks, where they were either crushed to death or found such an insecure footing that the succeeding waves dashed them off again and soon ended their wretched lives.

A part of the vessel was wedged in between two jagged masses of rock and held securely, the remainder being broken up and the fragments scattered all along the shore, the islanders reaping a welcome harvest therefrom.

Noll went aboard the fixed portion of the ship as soon as it was safe to do so, the storm having abated, and the wreck showing no sign of being reclaimed by the sea.

To his great delight he found two or three axes, a carpenter's tool-chest with saws, hammers, augers, nails, screws and brads, a two-foot rule and level, and in fact everything he wanted.

Besides these, and very precious it would prove, was a keg of gunpowder, containing sufficient to have blown up the whole ship.

In the after-cabin he found books, an invaluable treasure, several suits of good clothing, blankets and bedding, one good compass, a fine watch, and a miscellaneous assortment of cheap trinkets, evidently intended for disposition among the natives of the Pacific islands.

These he distributed to his swarthy comrades who assisted him in his search, but a plate-glass hand mirror of fine quality which he found among the captain's effects, he bestowed upon Ayama, whose wonder and delight thereat knew no bounds.

He put aside such things as he wanted for his own use, and then told the natives that they were free to have the rest, an offer which they were not slow in accepting, although they took nothing but what he had said they could have.

His first task was to make a number of strong, serviceable chests for the safe disposal of his treasures, and having tools and material right to hand, he was not long in making what he wanted; his work being rather more remarkable for strength and durability than for beauty of appearance.

His chests were strong and solid, provided with good lids well hinged on, and were bound about with iron hoops, which increased their usefulness, lacking nothing but locks to make them complete.

They had stout wooden handles, however, and could be fastened by ropes or buckles set into the lid and the front panel of each, which locked together and were held in place by a strong wooden plug.

He made as many of these chests as the material at hand afforded him, being assisted in many things by the natives, who were quick to imitate, and some of whom made very fair carpenters with a little teaching.

Having secured journeymen, therefore, to aid him in

his work, Noll was able in the course of a week from the time he began the work to turn out about two dozen chests three feet by two and eighteen inches deep inside, being thus obliged to stop for want of available wood.

Ayama, who came often to inspect and wonder at his work, saw his dilemma, and at once pointing out a number of huge trees standing upon the hills to the natives, commanded them to take the axes and saws and chop down and make them into planks.

She had seen Noll at work, and had asked him many questions which he had thought nothing of at the time, but he now realized that the intelligent girl had treasured up the bits of knowledge he had given her until she was able to see just what he needed, and how it was to be procured.

While the natives were occupied in felling the trees and converting them into logs, and then into planks, Noll himself once more visited his treasure-house with a view to seeing what could be done towards getting out the remaining treasure.

It had not been disturbed very much by the actions of the waves in the recent storm, and Noll saw that he would be obliged to break it up.

First, however, he went down with an axe to see if he could cut away the decks or side sufficient to let in more light.

The wood had been almost petrified, however, from remaining so long under water, and he only dulled his axe in the attempt.

Suddenly, however, the means of getting at the hidden wealth suggested itself to him.

He would blow up the wreck with gunpowder!

No sooner thought of than he began putting this plan into execution.

He had material for making a fuse, and after a few abortive attempts he at last succeeded in preparing the right sort.

He would require a great deal of it, however, for he had no means of igniting it under water, and then it would have to be covered with a water-tight case, in which it could burn without danger of being extinguished.

First, however, he made his fuse, using oakum, of which he found a quantity on board, covering it with a woven cocoa fiber, prepared for him by the native women, who had no idea of what he was doing.

He used the gunpowder freely, knowing that he had plenty, making it into a paste with fresh water and mixing it well with the oakum, so that when lighted it would burn continuously.

When his fuse was made the next thing was to cover it with something which would keep out the water and not burn through, two most important requisites.

After thinking over the matter he consulted the princess, explaining to her as well as he could and showing her in the presence of some of the others the terrible nature of gunpowder.

The result was that a covering was made for the fuse, woven from the fiber of green rushes, which would not only be water-tight, but would not possibly burn through in the time required for the fire to traverse down to the bottom.

When this was put over the fuse, it was covered thickly with gum and pitch, and thus made absolutely impervious to water, a section of it, stopped at both ends, being tested and found after a day's submersion to give entire satisfaction.

All this time nothing was being lost, for the box making was going on under Ayama's supervision, and another lot of natives were weaving the fuse cover, so that all the work on hand progressed rapidly; the natives having taken a great interest in the affair, although they could not understand what it was all about.

Noll had prepared in the meantime a bomb made of cocoanut shells, water-tight, and filled with gunpowder, to which he attached the fuse, covering over the place of connection with gum and pitch, so as to prevent the slightest leak.

When all was ready he dove down to the ship, and selecting a good place to put his cartridge, came up again and donned his diving apparatus and helmet.

His appearance in this novel armor, which none of the natives had seen, quite terrified them, but assuring them by gestures that he would not harm them, he took his precious cartridge in his arms, with the forty or fifty fathoms of fuse coiled up neatly on the rock, and jumping into the water, quickly reached the bottom.

The line was paid out, the end being held by one of the natives, and then our hero put his bomb in position, covering it with a mass of rubbish, so as to increase the force of the explosion.

Then he went above, removed his armor, and securing the fuse so that it might not slip away, touched a match to it.

It began to splutter and glow, and the fire, traveling downward, looked like a red eye disappearing below the waters.

Noll had previously made experiments with his fuse, both in the air and under water, and found it to be a rapid one and perfectly satisfactory, and he now had no doubt of the success of his plan.

It would take an hour to reach the bottom of the sea, and looking at his watch, another thing which greatly puzzled the natives, he timed the moment of the explosion.

When forty or fifty minutes had elapsed, thinking that

perhaps the explosion might take place sooner than he had anticipated, he made the natives withdraw, and himself took up a position on the rocks from which he could witness the finale in perfect safety.

The hour passed and nothing had been seen or heard to show that the scheme was to succeed.

Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen, and still no demonstration from below.

Had the fuse expired for lack of air?

That could not be for he had made the covering sufficiently large to allow of this.

Poor Noll was beginning to despair, and had turned away in disgust and vexation, when a sudden shout attracted his attention.

Turning quickly about he saw a volume of water shoot into the air, heard a dull explosion, and then saw the waters littered with rubbish of all sorts.

Seizing a heavy stone he plunged into the sea with it, and upon reaching the bottom saw that his experiment had succeeded.

CHAPTER IX.

AWAITING THE RETURN OF THE EXILE.

The hull of the old ship had been rent in two, the deck thrown up and split into yawning gaps, and now the whole vast treasure lay exposed to the eye.

There were glittering heaps of gold and silver in bars, trunks bursting with gold coin, chests filled with gold and silver drinking cups richly bejeweled, massive golden candlesticks, golden helmets, golden breastplates, golden shields and articles of every possible description made of the precious metal and adorned with precious gems.

There were chests upon chests filled with cups, tankards, salvers and ewers of precious gold; there were huge coffers brimful with bags of gold and silver coin; there were heaps upon heaps of ingots, and in one place several iron chests like those already found, in which were the rarest articles of jewelry that the sun ever beheld.

There were diamonds, sapphires, garnets, amethysts, emeralds and other costly gems, made up in every fashion or lying unset in bewildering masses, so that one could thrust his hand deep into the piles and not reach the bottom.

Here was wealth to the value of millions, and it was all Noll's, every penny of it, to be used in his work of vengeance.

"I shall be an emperor among millionaires!" he cried. "I shall be able to sway the destinies of nations. I shall be the wonder of all, a man to whom thousands shall be as nothing."

But with all this weather he was still a prisoner on the island.

"No, no," he cried as his thought swept over him, "I will not be, I will fly from this spot, I will leave it as soon as the means are provided. Have I not fine weather? What thus stops me when I wish to go?"

The work of bringing up this treasure was intrusted to the superintendence of the princess, who, when told by Noll that he desired all these pretty things, of which there was an abundance below, to be brought up, commanded the divers to obey their god, which they now all believed Noll to be.

A hundred dusky divers sprang into the water, and when they came up, their hands filled with gems and gold, a hundred others took their places and soon returned equally laden.

Then they were divided into squads, each under a leader and each man provided with a leather bag, and the work went on with systematic dispatch.

Sharks were attracted to the spot, but the sentinels, swimming about outside the spot where the divers appeared and disappeared, kept careful watch, and more than once the crimson hue of the waters spoke of a death struggle in which sometimes the shark, but oftener the natives, had come off victorious.

The treasure was piled into the chests and these dragged away to a cave among the rocks, but the chests were all exhausted, and still the heap of wealth accumulated upon the rocks, growing higher and higher as the hours went on.

* * * * * * *

A rocky cave, around the walls of which are piled tiers upon tiers of stout chests all filled to the brim with gold and jewels.

Upon the rough floor with but a narrow passage between them, are glittering heaps of gold and silver ornaments, armor and utensils, ingots and piles of costly gems.

There is but little light in the place and that comes from fissures in the rocky walls, the entrance to the cave, a stout oaken door at the end of a low vaulted passage being closed.

The place is tabooed, and none of the natives who know of its existence dare enter, or even approach it while the prohibition lasts.

This is Noll Sturtevant's treasure cave, and here his millions await his pleasure—await the time when he shall come and bear them away, as they have waited for many years.

The sad young stranger grew heartsick, and longed for his own native land, far, far beyond the place where the sky kisses the sea, the young god, the handsome, noble be

(*Continued on page 20.*)

ALL AROUND WEEKLY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 30, 1910.

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS

Single Copies	.05 Cents
One Copy Three Months	.05 Cents
One Copy Six Months	$1.25
One Copy One Year	$2.50

Postage Free.

HOW TO SEND MONEY—At our risk send P. O. Money Order, Check, or Registered Letter; remittances in any other way are at your risk. We accept Postage Stamps the same as cash. When sending silver wrap the Coin in a separate piece of paper to avoid cutting the envelope. *Write your name and address plainly. Address letters to*

SINCLAIR TOUSEY, President
N. HASTINGS, Treasurer
CHAS. E. NYLANDER, Secretary

Frank Tousey, Publisher
24 Union Sq., New York

CHOICE READING MATTER.

When a Japanese maiden desires to show marked attention to her lover she uses the sharpened point of one of her finger nails in writing to him.

Mud is considered good enough pavement in a little town in Modoc County, California. A resident there, who spread some gravel in front of his house, is said to be "Cussedly high-toned."

New Zealand's government proposes to make loans to settlers, workmen, local bodies, and mining companies, at two per cent. interest. The total advances are not to exceed $10,125,000 in any one year.

An immense log, hollow at one end, was driven to a sawmill in La Crosse, and placed under the rotary saw, to remove the worthless end. A catfish as big as a four-months-old baby had taken up his abode therein, and the saw took off his head as quick as winking.

The mileage of the blood circulation reveals some astonishing facts. It has been calculated, for instance, that assuming the heart to beat sixty-nine times a minute at ordinary pressure the blood goes at the rate of 206 yards in a minute, or nine miles an hour, 227 miles a day and 80,000 miles a year. If a man 84 years old could have but one single blood corpuscle floating in his blood all his life it would have traveled in that time nearly 7,000,000 miles.

More than elsewhere in the world, boys are treated as nuisances in Bohemia. In that country all the butter is churned by treadmill power, furnished by dogs. One of the laws is that if any boy throws a stone, even accidentally, and hits a dog, the boy must work the churn power until twenty pounds of butter have been made. If the lad happens to be lame, so that he cannot use his legs, he must hire some one to do the work or go to jail for three days.

Water birds which are ordinarily able to float high on the water can also sink at will by expelling the air which is enclosed within the film of feathers surrounding their bodies, thus making them heavier than water. This mechanical trick on the part of diving birds is probably familiar to all who have watched the kingfisher at close quarters and have noted the sudden contraction in the bird's apparent size as it takes the plunge. This is much more easily observed in the case of the starling, which sometimes imitates the kingfisher by plunging into water for food. The shrinkage of the bird in apparent size is very apparent, when, after hovering above the surface, it turns downward to dive.

Riflemen assembled at Camp Perry, O., for the target competitions under the auspices of the Federal government, the State of Ohio and the National Rifle Association last month watched with interest the exhibitions of the recently invented Benet-Mercier gun, which combines the rapidity of fire, range and effectiveness of a machine gun with the lightness and ease of action of a magazine rifle. The gun is fired from a rest and is held against the shoulder of its operator, who can either fire from a sitting position or lying prone. The regulation cartridge is used in clips that hold fifty. A good rifleman can discharge from 300 to 500 shots per minute, if assisted in feeding by a man to fill the clips. The gun is at present undergoing a series of tests by army officers with a view to its adoption by the government.

RIB TICKLERS.

"Husband, I wish you would buy me some pretty feathers." "Indeed, my dear little wife, you look better without them." "Oh, no," said she, coaxingly, "you always call me your little bird, and how does a bird look without feathers?"

"Yes, we've quarreled. I think this parting from Amelia will kill me." "I should think you would feel it." "Feel it? Why, great Scott! it's torture. She has two hundred thousand in her own right."

Jones: "Why don't you speak to Robinson now?" Brown: "Because he was engaged to my wife before I married her. I don't want to have any dealings with a man who is sharper than I am."

"You are the light of my life," she said to him as she told him good-night at the front door. "Put out that light," growled her faher at the head of the stairs, and the front door slammed.

"Ah!" said the good old lady who was visiting the prisoners; "how your poor wife must weep as she thinks of you here." "Which one, ma'am?" asked the convict addressed; "I'm up for bigamy."

Maude—Would you believe it, I had three offers of marriage last week. Clara—Then there must be some truth in that rumor. Maude—Rumor! What rumor? Clara—That your rich uncle has made his will in your favor.

"Yes, mum," said Tired Thompson, in reply to Mrs. Gazzam's intimation that he ought to be working instead of tramping, "yes, mum, I know it. I am not idle from choice, but I can't get the sort of employment I want, mum." "What would you like to do?" "I would like to be a college president, mum. Do you know where I could get that sort of a job?"

And He Obeyed.—"I am something of an expert at palmistry, dearest," said the young man, taking her hand. "In the lines of this fair palm I can trace——" "Oh, no, no, no! I don't want to know the future, Harry. But can you truly read the lines of the palm of my hand?" "I can, darl——" "Then please turn down the light a little lower, Harry," she said with a shudder.

STRANGELY DETECTED

By Paul Braddon

The heir to the great Dunham estates had been murdered.

His body had been found in a swamp, at the edge of a wood bordering the park and grounds of the house.

There was a knife wound in his side, just below the heart, and a severe contusion upon his head.

In his hand, clutched so tightly that it was removed with difficulty, was a bit of blue cloth, evidently torn from a muffler worn by one of the murderers.

I say murderers, because it was argued that more than one person must have committed the horrid deed.

Near the place where the body had been found were discovered the footprints of two persons, both wearing heavy boots.

The blow on the head and that in the side had evidently been struck at the same moment, the one stunning him and the other letting out his blood, for had he not been unconscious he would not have bled to death, as was apparent.

That two men had done this thing was apparent, and upon this reasoning the police were set to work.

The affair happened in England, and young Howard Dunham was heir apparent to a large estate, including houses, lands, and many hundred thousands in money.

That the young man—scarcely more than a boy—had been murdered, was beyond question, and now the thing was to discover the motive.

He had not an enemy in the world.

At least it was said he had not, though his cousin, a man somewhat older than himself, had always treated him rather coldly, and even quarreled with him.

This cousin would now come into the ownership of the estate, he being the next heir, the property not being entailed.

It was whispered that this man had done, or hired to be done, the murder of his cousin, in order that he might inherit the estate.

But if he had, why had he taken the body to a place where it would be so easily found?

It was in England at the time, and though not retained upon the case, determined to work it up.

First, I determined to ascertain if there had been any tramps or gypsies seen around the place at the time when the murder had been supposed to occur.

No one knew whether there had been or not, but I at last discovered that a man with a mysterious wagon had been seen, and the tracks of wheels being found not far from the swamp, suspicion was directed towards him.

He had carried the body in his wagon as far as the swamp, and then thrown it into the water.

This was what the gossips said, but I did not give the story much credence.

I determined to hunt up this man with the wagon, however, and, on the day succeeding this discovery I came across him.

He was a traveling showman, taking photographic views of the country with the intention of exhibiting them in a stereopticon.

I knew the fellow at once by the description of his wagon, which had been given me, and I at once made up my mind to pump him.

He was stopping at a little country inn, and I easily made his acquaintance, finding him to be a harmless sort of fellow.

I learned, without the slightest trouble, that he had been taking photographs of some rare old trees and ancient ruins on the Dunham estate, at the very time when it was thought the murder must have been committed.

He spoke so freely about the affair that it did not seem possible he knew any more about it than a dozen others, but I determined to sound him, nevertheless.

It interested myself in his business, and finally, without my asking him, he said he would show me the views he had taken in the neighborhood of Dunham Hall.

Scarcely knowing why, I consented, never dreaming of what a revelation was to be made to me.

The man darkened a room, put up a white sheet, and lighting his lantern, got to work.

"I haven't touched up some of these pictures," he explained, "and they may need fixing a bit."

Then he showed the several scenes in black and white, the pictures being thrown upon the screen from the negatives themselves, and I recognized many of them as places I had seen.

Presently a view was thrown upon the white wall which caused me to utter an exclamation of surprise.

It represented a part of the very wood near where the murdered boy's body had been found, in the center being a large oak tree, which I instantly recognized.

At the foot of the tree were three figures.

It was these which surprised me, and caused me to cry out as I did.

One was a young man, well dressed and handsome, seated upon a root of the giant oak, his hat in his hand, the other placed carelessly upon the root; and one lay extended in an easy attitude.

Before him was a man, roughly dressed in a loose coat, corduroy breeches, and woolen stockings, with a soft hat on his head and a heavy stick in his hand.

He was evidently listening to what the young man was saying, but his mouth had a hard cynical expression which I did not like.

He seemed, too, to be looking, not at, but over the young man, toward some object behind him.

What this was I perceived at a glance.

It was a man, roughly dressed and villainous looking, kneeling upon one of the tree roots behind the young fellow, and in the act of reaching forward.

His hands were almost upon the other's shoulders, his evident intention being to pull the young man backwards from his seat.

His face was hard and cruel, and I could see, as plainly as though I had witnessed the scene myself, that the man was a villain, and that he meant some harm to the youngster before him.

I did not recognize the two men, but the face of the younger one I knew in an instant.

It was that of the murdered man, young Howard Dunham, the heir to a million.

No wonder then that I was surprised.

"Good heavens, man!" I cried. "Why do you show me this picture? Where did you get it?"

My exclamation caused the exhibitor to come out from behind his instrument, and as we saw the picture he too seemed surprised.

"What does this mean?" I asked.

"I know not, unless—— I have it!"

"Well?"

"The other day, while photographing, I left my camera standing for a few moments while I went to a spring for water.

"It was all ready and there was a plate inside, the dark cloth being over the tube, however.

"In my absence the wind blew the cloth off, and when I came

back I found that the camera had taken a picture for me itself.

"I merely glanced at it and saw that it was the old oak, and that there appeared to be two or three figures in it, and put the plate aside.

"I had already taken several better views of it, nearer too, and therefore did not care for this one.

"It is my instrument which has brought the figures up to this size, as I will show you," making a movement as if to take out the plate.

"Stop a minute," I said, going forward and taking the plate. "Do you know these figures?"

"I know the younger one."

He went away, and I restored the plate, the picture being thrown upon the wall with startling distinctness.

"Both men have mufflers." I observed. "The one upon the man in front being checkered, and the other one plain white."

"It might be light blue," the showman answered. "That would take white."

I started back, a sudden thought crossing my mind.

The bit of cloth found in young Dunham's hand was light blue.

"Will you sketch me those two faces?" I asked.

"With pleasure. The scene evidently represents the time just before the assault, and by it we may discover the murderers."

Indeed he offered me every assistance, making two sketches of the scene on the screen, armed with one of which, I went back to Dunham.

I soon had an opportunity of seeing the cousin, Mr. Walter Dunham, and comparing his face with those of the men in the picture.

He resembled neither of them, so I showed it to him, and asked him if he knew either of the men.

"I know one of them," he answered.

"Which?"

"The fellow with his hands stretched out. He was formerly a game-keeper here, but was discharged for dishonest practices."

"What was the game-keeper's name?"

"Ralph Hazletine, a hard, brutal, cruel man."

"It is said that you quarreled with your cousin?"

"So I did," he frankly admitted. "but I did not wish his death. I know that it has been said that I am at the bottom of this, but I assure you such statements are lies. I know Hazletine's haunts, and I will assist you to discover him at once."

Suspecting that the men would attempt to leave the country, I sent descriptions to Liverpool, with orders to arrest the fellows if they attempted to take passage by any outgoing steamer.

Then came word that one of the men, answering to the description of the fellow Hazletine, and bearing that name in fact, had left for America the previous day.

Nothing was left for it but to cable over to America to arrest the man upon his arrival, and then I began a search for the other man.

Meanwhile I had had the swamp searched, and then we discovered the knife with which the deed had evidently been committed, for, although it was rusty, there were still traces of blood upon it.

Upon the handle, on a silver plate set into the side, were engraved two initials, namely, "W. D."

"If that knife is not the property of Walter Dunham I am greatly mistaken." I said to myself. "After all, he is the real criminal, and those men were but his tools."

I went to the hall, and was told that he had gone to London to work up a clew he had found.

Mistrusting the man, I sent for the photographer, a strange notion having lately come into my head.

At the same time I telegraphed to Scotland Yard to have Mr. Walter Dunham detained on suspicion

When the photographer arrived I obtained permission to disinter the body of young Dunham, and also secured the service of a skillful surgeon.

Without going into details, I will state what my intention was.

It was to take a photograph of the retina of the man's eye, knowing that the impression of the last object he had seen in life would be found thereon.

There, reproduced by the aid of photography, was the face of Walter Dunham.

It was the cousin, then, that had committed the ruffianly deed, and the story of his having found a new clew must be a blind.

Resolving not to let all three of the villains escape, I took passage by the fastest steamer I could find, and set out for America.

One day I went into the steerage, merely for amusement, and there, to my surprise, I saw the third man, the one with the heavy stick.

Saying nothing, I hastened to my state-room, and procuring one of the sketches, returned and suddenly presented it before the man's astonished gaze.

"Detected! By Heaven, detected!" he cried, and then fell into a swoon, from which he never recovered.

Here was one disappointment; but when I arrived in New York another one awaited me.

The steamer in which Hazletine had sailed was reported missing, and as the days passed by and nothing was heard from her, the fear that she was lost gaining strength every day.

Two or three years passed, and Walter Dunham had never been found, the estate, as I subsequently learned, having been all sold by him previous to his disappearance, when one day I met a man on Broadway, in the city of New York, whom I thought I knew.

I did, indeed, for a second glance assured me that it was the traveling showman by whose aid the murderer of Howard Dunham had been so strangely detected.

"Glad to see you," he said. "I am exhibiting my pictures at Chickering Hall. Come up to-night and see them."

I did so and was delighted with what I saw, particularly when I recognized several of the scenes around Dunham Hall.

Whether he did it by accident, or the desire to give me a surprise, I cannot tell, but suddenly the exhibitor showed that scene at the foot of the old oak, with those three figures in it.

I uttered an exclamation of surprise, and as I did so I heard a muttered oath behind me.

I darted a quick glance at the speaker, and recognized him, despite the changes which time had wrought.

He hastily left the hall, but I followed and, once in the street, passed my arm through his and said:

"Walter Dunham, murderer I have you at last!"

He recognized me at once, and endeavored to draw a pistol upon me, but in a moment I had thrown him down, and calling an officer, had him taken to the nearest police station.

There he made a full confession, being utterly broken down, having been ever haunted by the memory of his crime and finding no respite, though he had traveled all over the world.

He had covered his cousin's money, and had employed Hazletine and another man to do the deed.

Hazletine never turned up again, the fate of the steamer being still a mystery, and that night after making the confession, Walter Dunham took a dose of poison and in the morning was found dead.

(*Continued from page* 16.)

ing who performed such wonders in their sight, has gone from among the islanders, and they know not whether he will ever return.

Ayama, the beautiful princess, sits all day among her maidens, or wandering upon the shore of that boundless sea, which has torn her love from her, waits patiently for his return, and never once utters a complaint.

He has told her that he will come again and bear her to his own beautiful land, where she will be petted, caressed, admired, and envied, and though the days come and go, though months and years have passed, and she has never seen the gleam of the wings of the strange bird that will bring him back, yet she never doubts that he will keep his word, never distrusts that he will not return.

Many other white-winged birds have come here, many strange men from strange lands have come here, some of whom have found colonies and taught the simple people many curious, many strange things, but Noll had not been among them.

And the princess, trusting in him, never asks these strange creatures if they have seen him, never communes with them, but in her trust of him keeps her secret and her own counsels.

And the treasure cave, now long forgotten, except by her, remains closed to all, and the entrance is now grown about thickly with a rank growth of shrubs and trees and creeping vines through which it is well nigh impossible to cut one's way, to say nothing of penetrating it unaided by axe or knife.

Years have passed away since that day when, bidding her a fond adieu, he stepped aboard the little boat which had put out from the great ship that had come into the bay, and which he said was to take him to his own beloved land.

The strange creatures who took him away seemed to be precious in his sight, for he fell upon their necks and wept, and pressed their hands and gave them gold.

Then he had told her that they were Americans, his own countrymen, spoke his language, had seen his own house, that he was going away with them, but that some day he would come again and take her with him.

"Not now, dearest," he said, "not now, when dangers and disasters threaten, but by and by when the sun shines I will return and you shall be my own bride."

Then he told her never to let any one enter the cave, never to take the taboo off, never to speak of it even, that it might be forgotten by the natives and undiscovered by strangers.

Then he had gone away, bearing in his bosom a casket containing those beautiful toys which he had told her were worth so much in his country, and about his waist a belt filled with the broad gold coins which he valued so highly.

And all this had happened ten years before, and where was Noll now?

What had he been doing all this time, and why had he not returned?

He had been through many scenes of peril, through many adventures, had traveled many thousands of miles and had greatly changed.

The jewels he had sold, the gold he had exchanged, and, entering into business, had, after becoming once more acquainted with the ways of men, gradually gained a competency.

Speculating carefully, he had increased his wealth until he was owner of a ship in which he traveled all around the world in search of the man with the tattoed hand.

At last one day Ayama beheld a ship enter the harbor, the sight of which thrilled her with ecstasy, for there, fluttering from the masthead, was the scarf she had given him, and which he had said should be the signal of his return.

She saw him again, but his hair had turned gray, his eye was stern, the lines of his face hard and unchangeable until he saw her, and then he was her ardent lover as of old.

He was in command of this ship, the men obeyed him like slaves, he was their master, and was to all cold and stern, but to her he was all tenderness, and, folding her in his arms, he told her that he loved her as much as ever, and had come to fulfil his promise, and take her away to his own beloved land.

And, not many days afterwards, the good ship Avenger sailed away bearing Captain Noll, his princess and his millions, and the work of vengeance so long delayed was about to begin.

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN OF MYSTERY, HIS AGENTS AND HIS VISITORS.

The talk of the city and the country at large was the rich Mr. Golden, of whose great wealth there were fabulous stories, and whose influence was reported to be greater than that of the Rothschilds themselves.

He was reported to be a great traveler, and able to converse in several languages with equal fluency, so that rumor was rife as to his real nationality.

Some declared him to be a foreign prince traveling incognito; others affirmed him to be the agent of some great nation, negotiating loans for his government; he was the secret emissary of Russia, sent out to apprehend the cre-

mies of the Czar; he was an eastern nabob in disguise; he was an escaped convict, and in short, wherever one turned they could hear a different story concerning him.

That he was wealthy was beyond dispute, for he hired a whole suite of apartments in the finest hotel in New York, took a box at the opera for the season, drove magnificent turnouts, and had half a dozen liveried servants in constant attendance upon him, was the founder of a bank, the principal owner of a great newspaper, monopolized all the best-paying stock, ran two theaters, owned a yacht, had a sheep-ranch in California, possessed the biggest herd of cattle in Texas, owned a mine in Colorado, and another in Nevada, was about to build the largest hotel ever known, and was spoken of as a prospective member of Congress.

All these things were reported of Mr. Golden as being indisputable facts, and consequently a man that could do as much as that must be the possessor of great wealth.

He was invited to balls, receptions and parties without number, but as yet he had respectfully declined all requests for the pleasure of his society, and had held himself strictly aloof from social intercourse.

He was generally seen in Wall street once a day during banking hours, entering his office from his carriage, and not again that day, so that he must either leave in disguise or long after all business had ceased in the street, and it was left to janitors and belated pedestrians.

One dark, misty, disagreeable morning, some three years subsequent to the incidents last recorded, the great Golden was seated at a table in his inner office, consulting a mass of papers by the light of a shaded gas-lamp, and smoking an exquisitely perfumed cigar.

This mysterious person was a man of forty, though he seemed much older, for his dark hair was thickly mixed with gray, a heavy gray mustache adorned his upper lip, and the lines of his face denoted him to be hard, stern and inflexible.

Presently a man entered, evidently one of the officers of the bank, and Golden looking up, said:

"You have examined into the matter of the estate of old Singleton?"

"I have."

"And what have you learned?"

"That it was settled upon the appearance of Edward Singleton fifteen or twenty years ago, the old man having then been dead a year."

"Ned Singleton appeared?"

"Yes, and proved his claim, took possession, lived in the neighborhood for some time, and then disappeared."

"Did he have any trouble in proving his claim?"

"No, for he brought with him the most indisputable proofs, papers spoken of only in the will, documents absolutely necessary to prove his identity, and besides——"

"Ha, was anything else needed?"

"He also brought from its long hiding-place in South America a valuable treasure, the productions of which was necessary, in order that he might be entitled to the estate, such a provision having been included in the will."

The man of mystery drew a deep sigh, passed his hand across his face and said:

"You have not learned yet where this young millionaire lives, or if he lives at all?"

"He appears to have utterly disappeared."

"One thing more; did I not understand that his papers described his personal appearance minutely?"

"They did, and the description tallied exactly with his own."

"You obtained a copy of the will?"

"Yes, and it is here," the speaker therewith handing the other a written document and then departing.

Immediately afterwards another man entered, and to him Golden said:

"Well?"

"I have discovered that Edward Singleton died three years after his coming into the estate."

"Where?"

"In the West; I have the official record of his death and burial, and subsequent disinterment."

"He was not allowed to remain in the West, then?"

"No, for the Singletons have all been buried in the family vault in this city. A friend of the family discovered that he had been buried out West, having died there suddenly from a contagious disease, had the remains removed, put into an hermetically sealed coffin, and brought here and buried."

"He died suddenly you say! Was there no will?"

"Oh, yes, he left everything to this friend I speak of, who, not hearing from him, made a thorough search and discovered the fact of his untimely death."

"And this man inherited all of young Singleton's enormous wealth?"

"Every penny of it."

"And his name is——"

"Oliver Sturtevant!"

"It is a lie, a black, accursed lie!" cried Golden, striking his fist heavily on the table, while his face assumed an expression of the fiercest rage.

As rapidly as had this storm come up, so quickly did it pass away, for in another instant his face had assumed its wonted composure and he was ice itself in his coolness.

"I forgot myself," he said, so quietly that one would never have supposed him capable of being so greatly disturbed as he had recently been. "The hearing of that

name, well known to me, by the way, deprived me for a moment of my composure. There is nothing else?"

"No."

"Very well."

The man bowed and left the place, and at a summons from the little silver bell on the table, another man entered.

"I wish you to discover for me if Oliver Sturtevant, sole legatee of Edward Singleton, deceased, is still alive, where he is, what he is worth, and all the facts, in short, that you can learn about him."

"Where shall I begin to search?"

Golden opened a drawer in the safe, took a small packet of papers therefrom, handed it to the man, and said:

"Within you will find a list of his relatives, what few there are. Hunt them up and make your inquiries of them."

The man took the papers and departed, Golden sitting in a deep reverie for some time, and not noticing the entrance of a newcomer, a lady, tall, graceful, richly but heavily veiled.

This person glided over the velvet carpet, which gave forth no sound, and putting aside her veil, thereby revealing one of the most beautifully sad faces the sun ever beheld, threw herself at the banker's feet, wound her arms about his neck, pressed a kiss upon his forehead and cried exultantly:

"I have found him, my prince, at last I have seen him, and you shall be avenged!"

CHAPTER XI.

A FACE WHICH AWAKENED BITTER MEMORIES.

"You have found him, Ayama?" asked Golden, raising the beautiful creature from her place at his feet.

"Yes, my prince. I knew his bad face in a moment, though many years have gone since I saw it. He lives here, he is rich, he is powerful, he has many friends."

"So had I a friend once, Ayama, and this man killed him. Had he the whole world on his side I would bring him down."

It is unnecessary to explain that the mysterious Mr. Golden, the wealthy banker, the modern Crœsus, is our old friend Noll Sturtevant, for our readers will have guessed it before this.

Yes, it was Noll indeed, though sadly changed, the years of struggling with adverse fortune, of searching and plotting, now in this country, now in that, meeting with all sorts of adventures, now on the eve of discovery as it seemed and then doomed to disappointment, all this had told upon him, and at forty he was an old man.

Now he owned ships that went over all the world, his agents were sent everywhere, he could draw his check for a million and think nothing of it, he was talked about all over the world, but still his vengeance was not satisfied and the fair face of his poor chum, Ned Singleton, with his blue eyes and his clustering curls like woven sunshine, seemed to gaze sadly upon him, and he could almost hear the well-remembered voice asking mournfully:

"Why have you not requited my cruel death, Noll? Why does the murderer walk abroad unpunished?"

And now his princess, the faithful Ayama, grown to womanhood, and in her maturity more wonderously beautiful than ever, had told him that she had seen the man for whom he had searched so long and vainly.

Ayama was no longer the beautiful savage, she was a refined, cultured, intelligent woman, keen of perception, quick to see the falsities of the world, and yet warm in affection, frank and generous, ever ready to befriend the forsaken or to assist the broken-down toilers in the busy world, and yet as eager for revenge as Noll himself.

"Who is he?" asked Noll.

"I do not know, but I will know him again, I will track him down. I only know that he is a person of power and influence here, and his name matters not, I will learn that."

"You are sure it is he?"

"Yes, the face is the same."

"Men's faces change, my dearest. Who would know me now for the eager sailor lad I was when you first saw me?"

"But I know that face better than all, for it is fixed in my memory."

"His face is nothing. Did you see his hand?"

"His hand?"

"Aye; the right one. Show me the tattooed hand and I care not if his face has changed a hundred times. I shall know him again, for that will not change."

"True; I had forgotten."

Ayama then left the counting-room, and was driven away in a close carriage, for she did not care to attract the vulgar gaze of the crowd, and never went out without being closely veiled, which gave rise to the rumor that the banker's wife, though having all that money could buy, was hideously ugly, and that this it was that made him so sad.

It was late before Noll left the office, night having fallen over the city, and the street being dark and silent when he stepped out and made his way quickly towards Broadway.

His coming had evidently been awaited, for as he passed a building before which there were massive stone pillars, two men suddenly sprang out upon him.

One seized him by the throat and the other pinioned his arms to his side in a close grasp and whistled to a third.

Noll had fought hand to hand with pirates, and had thrown heavier men than himself, his long life in the open air having given him nerves of steel.

With a quick movement he released one of his arms, and striking straight out from the shoulder took the fellow who garroted him full in the eyes.

The villain dropped as though struck by lightning, and in a moment Noll had turned, and taking the second man under the chin, sprawled him senseless into the middle of the street.

At the same time he heard a quick step behind him, and before he could turn around received a blow on the head which nearly staggered him.

It had not fallen with its full force, or he would never have survived it, the man being armed with a slung-shot.

But for Noll's having turned somewhat, and not receiving the blow when it was intended to be given, he would have been killed, and as it was he was badly stunned.

He fell to his knees, sick and faint, and with an oath the ruffian advanced upon him to complete his murderous work.

Robbery was evidently the motive of the men, and at that hour of the night, and considering the deserted condition of the street, there was every chance of their being successful.

Noll made an attempt to draw a revolver, but the first man had sprung up by this time, and in an instant he had seized Noll's arms and held them behind him.

"Slug him, Jim!" he hissed, "and then we'll go through him quietly. He always carries lots o' rocks in his pockets."

The robber stepped forward and raised his hand to deal the fatal blow.

Crack!

A pistol-shot rang out clear and sharp upon the midnight air, and the sound of hurrying footsteps was heard.

The murderer's hand fell at his side, the wrist shattered by a bullet, the deadly weapon rolling into the street.

"Cheese it, boys!" cried one of the men, evidently a newcomer.

Noll's assailant seized a knife in his left hand, evidently determined to have revenge for being cheated out of his prey, and faint as Noll was, he could not resist, and it seemed as though he was to be a victim, after all.

"You murderous villain!" cried a clear, ringing voice: "four to one, and your victim an old man at that. Make tracks, or I will riddle the whole of you."

"There's only one, Jim," yelled the wounded man. "Let's finish him, too!"

Crack!

Crack!

Two shots were heard and then a cry of anguish and a dull thud as though a heavy body had fallen upon the stones.

Instantly Noll sprang to his feet, his strength suddenly reviving, and whipping out his own weapon he fired at the retreating forms of the villains, who were glad to escape with their lives.

"Young gentleman," said Noll, grasping the other's hand, "you have saved my life, and I thank you for it. Believe me, sir, you shall not regret this night's work."

"I was going home, very late, when I heard the scuffle, and running up saw your peril. I always go armed at night, and in that way was enabled to do you a service."

"Ah, I hear the police coming," said Noll, suddenly, and presently two of the city guardians came up and learned the particulars of the affair.

One of the ruffians was dead and another so badly wounded that he could not get away, and was therefore taken into custody.

"You will have to go with me to the station," said one of the officers, "and give an account of yourselves. It mayn't be as straight as it looks. We've got to be careful, you know. You may be old offenders."

"You have a lantern," replied Noll, quickly. "Look at me."

The man flashed the light in Noll's face, and then said, with great astonishment:

"Why, it's Mr. Golden, the millionaire! Excuse me, sir. You're all right, and you can do as you like."

"I will vouch for this young gentleman, officer," said Noll, coldly, and, putting his arm through that of the man who had given such timely aid, he bade the officers good-night, merely adding that he would be found at his office in the morning if they desired him to make a statement.

"To whom am I indebted for this valuable assistance?" asked Noll, pleasantly, as they walked up the street. "You know me now, I presume, or my name at least?"

"My name is Richard Blauvelt, Mr. Golden, and I am proud to have done you a service."

"Then, Richard Blauvelt," said Noll, pressing something into the young man's hand, "if ever you should need help in any way send this to my office, and no matter whether I am there or not, your slightest wishes shall be obeyed."

"A diamond ring!"

"Yes, but not of the ordinary kind as you will see. There is not another like it in the country, and there will be no mistaking it."

"I will return it as a keepsake only, Mr. Golden, and I trust that I may see more of you."

"Perhaps you will. Here is a carriage. You are going

uptown? Ride with me as far as you go, and then I will continue alone."

They entered the carriage which they had found on Broadway and were soon rattling in the direction of uptown, Noll saying but little and young Blauvelt, who appeared not more than nineteen or twenty, nor caring to disturb his new acquaintance's reverie.

He was let down at his residence, which he gave to Noll, and then our hero was driven to his hotel, retiring at once to his rooms.

"That boy has done me a service," he murmured, as he paced up and down before the fire in his dressing-room, "but his face has awakened bitter memories and haunts me like a nightmare. Something will come of this meeting to-night, and perhaps it is fortunate that this boy has made me his friend, else I might strike at another through his heart!"

CHAPTER XII.

SETTING THE SNARES FOR THE EVIL-DOER.

A month passed and the city is at its gayest.

Receptions, operas, balls and dinner-parties are the rage, and scarcely any great entertainment is given that Golden is not invited to grace the company with his presence.

To all he sends word that he never goes out to drive or take any pleasure, and the hosts are disappointed.

He has been seen at the opera with a magnificent looking woman at his side, fairly blazing with jewels, for two or three nights past, however, and curiosity is piqued to know if that is his wife who was reported so hideously ugly.

This night, Ayama, sitting at his side, converses with him during the intermissions, and says as the curtain goes down on an act:

"I have showed you the man I saw; do you believe it is he?"

"It may be, and if so, to-morrow will prove his ruin. I have spread my nets for Blauvelt the banker, and if he proves the man he cannot escape me; I will ruin him, run him to earth, and never stop until my vengeance is satisfied."

"You hate this man so much that you would shut out your love for everything good belonging to him?"

"Yes," answered Noll, bitterly. "Did I not see him strike an innocent boy to the heart, that he might rob him of his wealth? Has he not plotted and planned to make his position so secure that nothing would shake it? I tell you what he has done:

"First, he has foisted upon the world a guileless boy whom he has bent to his own foul purposes, to represent my poor Ned, making him conform in appearance to him in every respect, so as to get possession of this wealth.

"Then when it was his, having got possession before of the hidden treasure and murdered the man who assisted him to it, he has sent his poor tool into a fever-smitten country where he has been seized with the disease and has died, his body, long beyond recognition, being sent here and buried in the family vaults, to keep up the cheat.

"Then he has executed a false will of poor Ned's to me and has had me impersonated for his base ends, killing my representatives off and having everything bequeathed to him.

"Why has he done all this? To make his claim strong beyond dispute. But he has done too much and has weakened his position. He might have boldly seized upon the whole estate, after the first move, and baffled me to take it from him, but instead, he has left a track of guilt behind him which my agents have followed up until the whole hideous plot is laid bare.

"The guilty wretch is tortured by conscience, and seeks to build an impregnable wall around him, but it is full of flaws, and one day it will fall upon and crush him.

"This man you showed me once. Since when I have not seen him. Do you know what he is? A cautious, crafty, suspicious person, who seems always on the watch to see if any one suspects him. He stands high in social life; he goes out constantly; he gives dinner-parties and receptions; he entertains the best people of the city; he is reputed charitable, and a patron of the church. Why? To throw suspicion off the scent. An honest man would not be obliged to do this. He mixes in society? Yes; but he says little, and wherever he is, whether at home or in his own home, never removes the glove from his right hand!

"How do I know all this? My life among your people taught me to be crafty, to observe everything, to let nothing escape me, to forget nothing. It also taught me to let others do my work while I seemed to remain idle. For a month my spies have been busy, here and elsewhere, and what is the result?

"They have brought in information which this man thought hidden forever from the world, they have spread my nets for me, and now this thrice accursed villain has but to put his neck into the noose, at my bidding, and hang himself!"

"For years have I suffered and toiled, searched and hunted, endured hardship, privation and banishment, been hunted by secret enemies, been pursued by men thirsting for my gold, and do you wonder at the depth of my hate, at the eagerness with which I now follow the scent to which my long years of unremitting toil has placed me upon? No, you cannot wonder at it for it is you who have taught me patience and cunning, you who have urged me on."

"My love for you, my prince, makes me interested in what interests you; your thoughts are my thoughts, your hates, your revenges, mine!"

At this moment the orchestra struck up the opening bars of the next act, the curtain rose, and all conversation was suspended during the time that the stage performance continued.

At the end of the act young Richard Blauvelt came into the box and gave Noll a pressing invitation to attend a reception at his father's mansion immediately after the close of the opera.

"I never go anywhere, boy," answered Golden. "My wife is passionately fond of music, and that is the only reason you see me here."

"But you must come to this affair, the grandest of the season. You said you would grant my slightest wish, and surely you will not refuse my first request?"

"I shall keep my word if you insist."

"And I do insist, and ask you, by the friendship you have shown to me, to do me this favor."

"Take care," cried Noll, quickly, "don't ask me in the name of that—you do not know what might happen, and you may have cause to regret——"

"No, no, I never shall. But I have your promise, and that is sufficient. You will be there?"

"Yes."

"Thanks; I knew I should succeed, although they told me that you would never break through your rules for a boy like myself. Now I must be on, for I want to see several others before this act begins."

"You will go to this man's house?" asked the lady in an agitated tone, when Richard had departed.

"Yes."

"Think what you are doing. He is the father of the boy you have promised to protect."

"And if I have—what are promises when one has a vengeance like mine to execute? I would stab this boy to the heart could I wound this villain the deeper. Yes, I shall go to this man's house, and if he prove to be the object of my search, as I shall soon know, I will unmask and shame him before all his guests!"

An hour later the assembled guests gathered in the commodious drawing-room in the palatial residence of the banker Blauvelt were thrown into a flutter of excitement by hearing it announced that Golden, the man of mystery, the Crœsus of modern times, was about to appear in society, and at this very reception.

It was not long before he was announced by an usher, and immediately afterwards made his appearance alone, dressed in faultless evening costume, and wearing a hard, cold smile upon his usually passive countenance.

Glancing swiftly around he caught the eye of the host, looked him full in the face until he saw the blood mantle to the latter's very temples, and then, with a haughty bow, turned away and muttered to himself:

"He knows me! There can be no doubt of his identity. Now, Matthew Rayburn, murderer and thief, the duel is open, and I declare to you it shall be to the death!"

CHAPTER XIII.

NOLL TELLS THE STORY OF THE PAST.

"You do a banking business, I hear, Mr. Blauvelt?" said Noll presently, approaching the host, the others giving way for him.

"Yes."

"You have been investing largely in Peruvian bonds, I understand?"

"Yes," replied the other uneasily.

"Ah, so I thought. Better sell out at once before you lose. They will be down to nothing very soon."

"Why, it was on the advice of your correspondents that I bought."

"My correspondents are nothing to me."

"If they go down I am ruined," thought the wretched man.

"By the way," said a friend of Noll's, "talking of depreciation, the Silver Valley Railroad Company, of Colorado, has gone all to smash. Assets five dollars, in the hands of the defaulting treasurer, liabilities over a million."

"You had some of their paper, eh, Blauvelt?" asked one of the group with a smile.

The man flushed, bit his lips and said nothing, for he had been bitten by these bonds, and did not care to acknowledge it.

"Heard the news?" asked a newcomer, as if knowing nothing of what had been said. "Gold Nugget mine of Colorado turned out a fizzle, bondholders won't realize a cent, never was anything in it."

Blauvelt grew livid, for here was another speculation in which he had been advised to invest by Noll's secret agents, and ruin stared him in the face.

One after another tale of financial ruin was told in quick succession, among them some good houses whose failure was as unexpected as it was startling.

"Keep your eye on Blauvelt," said Noll to one of his agents, "he may take it into his head to abscond, and I am not through with him yet."

Presently Richard came up to Noll, who was standing in the center of a crowd of admirers, and said:

"Mr. Golden, you have traveled, I understand, and seen

many wonderful things, been in many strange adventures. What was the strangest adventure you ever had?"

"My meeting with you, my boy, was one."

"Oh, well, aside from that?"

"There was one which partly happened to me, and partly to a friend of mine, which I can combine into a very pretty story, if you care to hear it."

"Let us have it by all means," cried the listeners.

Noll took a seat on a low sofa, the others standing or sitting around, showed the greatest interest.

The narrator, looking quickly over his shoulder, saw Blauvelt, partly hidden by a mass of shrubs at the entrance to the conservatory, and at once began his recital.

"There were two boys once wrecked in the Pacific Ocean and cast upon an island. With them was a man of about thirty-five, perhaps younger, who, learning that one of the boys was the heir to a considerable property, including a buried treasure in South America, determined to kill him, and get hold of it."

A shudder went through the company, and Noll, without seeming to do so, noticed that the banker had advanced considerably nearer and was listening with deep emotion.

"This man," he continued, "had been tattooed by the natives of another part of the island, upon the hand, to such an extent that any attempt to remove the marks would prove fatal, or at any rate extremely dangerous.

"The man had once been tattooed on the left hand, but had taken out the marks by a chemical preparation, and had in that way escaped identification, being wanted for a crime committed three or four years previous.

"This crime was murder, and he had once been apprehended and tried, but while awaiting conviction, had escaped, and upon being arrested a year later his identity could not be proven, and he therefore escaped punishment.

"All this is necessary to explain what follows," and glancing quickly around from under his eye-lashes, Noll could see that the man was now standing within ten feet of him, pale and agitated. "This man, whose name was Matthew Rayburn, killed the boy, and disposing of his body, took away his papers and gained possession of the property, which has been the basis of an immense fortune which the guilty wretch now holds, fancying himself safe from justice.

"The companion of the boy who was murdered was not killed by Rayburn, although the man supposed he had done so, and that boy has devoted all his life to searching out the murderer and avenging the death of his friend."

"But what part do you play in this matter?" asked one.

"I will come to it presently. The man has been found, but not wholly identified, for no one has seen his tattooed hand, which he always wears gloved."

It was now young Richard Blauvelt's turn to become pale, and he looked at his father in an agony of doubt and fear, wholly unable to conceal his agitation.

"It is said that his right hand is false, and that, therefore, he keeps it gloved, but the reason is as I have stated. Once seen, that hand could never be forgotten. On the back is a trailing vine with leaves, tendrils and fruit, and on the palm a group of animals in a landscape, the thumb being occupied by a human figure. You will see at once that any one possessing a hand marked in such a manner would attract considerable attention were he to show it to his acquaintances."

"And you have not seen this hand?" asked one.

"No, but I have seen the man who has it and noticed that he always keeps it concealed, no matter where he may be. Once I tear that glove from his hand I shall know him and bitterly avenge his dastardly crime."

"You!" cried Blauvelt, before he could restrain himself.

"Yes, I, for the boy that was murdered was my friend, my bosom companion."

"And you are——"

"Golden, the banker," returned Noll icily, while Blauvelt concealed his vexation with an ill grace.

"But what revenge do you intend to take?" asked a spectator.

"First, ruin him, strip him of his wealth, drag him down to the lowest depths of misery, and then——"

"Yes, yes, and then?"

"Kill him!" said Noll, slowly, and with biting emphasis, "unless he adds another crime to his already long list and kills himself."

"If you know this man," cried Richard, hoarsely, "it is your duty to expose him. Father, father, what means this agitation? Speak to me or I shall go mad."

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT THE REMOVAL OF A GLOVE REVEALED.

At the words a strange hush fell upon the assembly, and not even a breath could be heard.

"Aye, let him speak, let him explain," said Noll, coldly, the words coming slow and distinct. "Let him tell his friends here what he knows of Matthew Rayburn and the cruel murder of Ned Singleton."

The banker's face was purple, a thin froth stood upon his lips, his eyes stared from their sockets, and he seemed about to fall in a fit.

"I know no one of that name," he gasped. "What is

all this to me? Who are you that you should thus insult me in my own house?"

"Who am I? Say, rather, who are you? Shall I tell your friends here?"

There was no answer, and a silence as of death fell upon the entire company.

"I will tell you," continued the other. "You are the thief who has stolen the fortune of one who saved you life, and to whom you promised a life's gratitude!"

"It is a lie! I have the property by inheritance!"

"From whom?"

"Young Sturtevant," almost whispered the accused. "He devised it from Ned Singleton."

"True, but have you the will of Ned Singleton, made before his untimely death, not forged after it?"

"What do you mean?" gasped the other.

"That here is the will of Ned Singleton to me," cried Noll, thrusting a paper yellow with age and deeply creased before the man's very eyes.

He cried out as if shot, and then staggered back, and would have fallen had not Richard caught him.

"What does this outrage mean, Mr. Golden?" cried Richard angrily. "Who are you that you accuse my father of such crimes?"

"I am Oliver Sturtevant, who is mentioned in this document, and that man is Matthew Rayburn, the man with the tattooed hand!"

A murmur of astonishment followed this startling declaration, and Richard cried, horsely:

"It is a lie!"

"No one else could have said that to me, boy, with impunity," returned Noll, slowly. "Do you force me to prove my assertions? If so, let this man unglove his right hand."

"He is the man himself!" hissed Blauvelt.

In an instant Noll's glove was off, and holding up his right hand, said:

"Gentlemen, you owe it to yourselves to follow me in this."

In a moment not one man's hand was covered, with the exception of young Richard and the banker.

"Now, murderer," cried Noll, "give me the lie if you can. What have you done with the body of poor Ned? It is not his which rests in the vault. Where is Noll Sturtevant buried, if he is dead? Why did not his relatives know of it if he died in his own country, as you have claimed? Answer me, murderer and thief!"

"No one can say they saw me kill Ned Singleton," gasped the banker.

"I can say so, for stunned, though not unconscious, I beheld the whole dreadful deed. Do you know this?"

He suddenly threw a knife at the man's feet and added:

"That is Matthew Rayburn's knife; your knife. Do you want any more proof?"

The wretched man was pallid with fear and rage, but he managed to stammer forth, seemingly unconscious of contradicting what he had formerly maintained:

"Noll Sturtevant died upon the island. You cannot prove that you are he."

"No? Then here is my witness."

At these words some draperies were drawn aside at one corner of the room, and a strange figure appeared and glided forward.

This was a woman of olive complexion and surpassingly beautiful, clothed in a short, clinging skirt of some peculiar white fabric, her raven hair falling down upon her shoulders and back and ornamented with countless strings of pearls.

Her arms and throat were bare, and were decked with many strings of bright beads and shells interwoven; on her shapely feet were sandals and about her well-turned ankles were bands of silver adorned with pendant jewels, which tinkled at her slightest movement.

"Ayama, the island princess," cried the banker, in a hoarse whisper; but quickly recovering himself, he said, angrily:

"What masquerade is this? Who is this strange person, and what does she want?"

Everyone recognized in the beautiful creature the lovely woman who had been seated by Noll's side at the opera, and Richard was among the first to do so.

"Ask this lady, a princess of the Marquesas Islands, who I am, and whether I was ever in her country," said Noll.

Ayama seemed about to speak, when Blauvelt, with a hoarse cry, broke away from the party, and catching up the knife from the floor, rushed upon Noll, a deadly light shining in his bloodshot eyes.

With a quick movement, and seemingly with scarce an effort, Noll seized his wrist with his left hand, wrenched the knife away with his right, and then in an instant had ripped the glove open from wrist to finger-tips, and cast the limp fragments upon the floor.

Then dragging the man under a huge, brilliantly-lighted chandelier, where the light fell full upon him, he raised up the right hand, firmly held by the wrist, and cried:

"Behold the tattooed hand! Look at it and see if I have not described it correctly. There is but one hand thus marked, and its owner is Matthew Rayburn, the murderer, thief, forger, and fugitive from justice, now known as Blauvelt the great banker!"

As he ceased speaking he released the tattooed hand from his grasp and turned away in disgust.

Then a heavy fall was heard, followed by a cry of horror from Richard.

"He has fallen in a fit!" he shrieked. "You have killed him! Would you not have spared him for the life I gave to you that night when first we met?"

"No," answered Noll, coldly. "I owed a duty to my murdered friend, to Heaven! I have sworn to do justice and to tear the mask from the villain's face. I have done so. Gentlemen, good-night. I trust you have been interested in my story."

Then passing his arm through that of Ayama, he left the place and shortly afterwards his carriage was heard driving rapidly away.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

Early the next morning it was reported all over the city that the bank of Blauvelt had collapsed, or was upon the eve of doing so.

Long before the time of opening, the doors were besieged by an anxious, angry crowd of depositors eager for their money.

It was reported that Blauvelt had attempted to abscond, but that he had been prevented and was now inside the bank.

At ten o'clock a porter made his appearance, and hung a placard upon the outer door, which announced that the bank would open at eleven and close at two that day, on account of pressure of inside business.

"Cheat us out of two hours, eh!" growled an angry man whose fortune was intrusted to the keeping of the bank. "How do we know that they'll open at all to-morrow?"

"Let the thief come out here and show himself, if he dares," cried another. "Speculating, eh! What business has he to use our money?"

"Let's smash his windows for him," cried several upon the outskirts of the crowd.

It was not easy to find stones to hurl at the windows, but clubs, sticks and other missiles came into play, and a rattle of plate glass showed with what result.

The police prevented a further display of violence, however, and the crowd, although completely blocking up the street, was held in some sort of order until the clocks struck eleven.

Then there was a fierce chorus of cries, yells and groans, and presently the great doors were seen to be opening within.

"Hould on a minute," cried a voice inside, "don't be afther crushing a poor man wid the rush. Sure I have money inside mesilf, and I don't want to lose it any more than yersilves, nor do I want to be kilt. Aisy now till I dhraw the bolts, an' then ye can rush all ye hev a moind to."

Those pressed against the doors had to push those behind them, and then one-half of the door flew open.

There was a wild rush, the porter flying for his life, and as the doors were forced wide open the crowd surged in a fight for places at the teller's desk, beginning immediately.

A line of two abreast was formed by the police which ran down the steps into the street, around the corner and nearly to the end of the next square, men fighting for positions, and those who were unfortunate enough to be left out altogether or drawn towards the middle, offered high prices to those at the head for their places.

The tellers began paying out money at once, and those who were fortunate enough to receive it hung about the place watching those who were still waiting.

At noon Blauvelt, who sat in his inner office, called to a page and said:

"Send the cashier to me."

This official soon entered, and the banker said, hoarsely:

"How are things going?"

"Badly. It seems that all the heavy depositors are at the head of the line. Places have been bought for sums amounting to more than the holders' deposits."

"This is Golden's work!" hissed the man. "He means to ruin me, and is buying these places for the depositors."

"You should have gotten out of it last night. I tried to as soon as I heard of the trouble, but couldn't."

"There is no escape. I have been watched all night, and if I had attempted to leave would have been arrested and thrown into the Tombs."

"And your son?"

"And this boy is no son of mine at all, but a lad whom I adopted?"

"I didn't hear that."

"Well, it is so, but I did not suppose the woman would ever tell of it. I paid her well enough for her silence, I am sure."

"But now——"

"Oh, this man or his agents have found her out and offered her a fortune to disclose the truth. The boy knows I am not his father, and has abandoned me to my fate."

At this moment one of the clerks entered.

"How is the cash holding out, Mason?" asked Rayburn.

"We have just sent to the treasury to redeem our own notes, as the depositors will have nothing but gold or greenbacks."

"Well?"

"They won't take them."

Rayburn groaned, and at that moment a messenger entered.

"The papers of Messrs. Froude & Gilbert, which we tried to realize upon is worthless, sir."

"Go and relieve the assistant teller, and send him here."

Presently the latter entered, and, without waiting to be asked, said:

"The funds in the vaults are melting away fast, sir. We haven't paid out a single claim of less than five hundred dollars, and many of them run into the thousands."

At one o'clock the vaults had been emptied of their last dollar, the money being piled in the middle of the space inclosed by the railings, and this pile was rapidly diminishing.

"If I could mortgage my house I might get clear of this," muttered Rayburn, "but no one will let me have a penny since that accursed story came out. I thought I was safe forever, and now this fellow returns from the grave to accuse me, and I dare not deny his story."

Half-past one had arrived, and the teller entering Rayburn's office, said:

"Would it do to close up now?"

"No; the crowd would tear the place down about our ears. How much money have you got?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Can't you hold out?"

"If we had only small depositors we might, but some of those behind have paid men in front of them the whole amount of their claims to give up their places."

Suddenly a loud shout was heard outside, and one of the bank messengers entered in hot haste, crying:

"Golden has promised to pay every claim against the bank less than five hundred dollars, and the line is breaking up."

"Golden!" hissed Rayburn. "He does this to make capital for himself and to gain favor with the masses."

At this moment the cashier came in, and sending everyone else out, said hoarsely:

"A strange man with a certified draft of ours for ten thousand dollars has presented it and demands payment."

"Can he identify himself?"

"He has Golden's indorsement."

"Won't he take an extension?"

"No."

"How much cash is there?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"Won't he take that on account?"

"No."

"Then close the windows, turn out the crowd, and shut the doors."

"Then that means that——"

"The bank is broken!"

At that instant, as the cashier was leaving, the chief teller came in hurriedly and said:

"We have paid out the last dollar, and here come a lot of big claims, the holders of which will not be put off."

"Leave me!" cried Rayburn. "Tell them that we are ruined."

They all went out, leaving him alone, and then, looking about him in a frightened manner, he quickly opened a drawer of the little table and took out something which had been concealed them.

Crack!

A startling report is heard, and as the officers of the bank and a number of strangers crowd into the little room, they behold a form lying upon the carpet with a bullet in the right temple and a small revolver in the right hand, which is gloved.

The banker had committed suicide.

One of the strangers, he who has presented the money draft, looks at the body for an instant and then turning away mutters sadly:

"Ned, my boy, you are avenged at last."

* * * * * *

Our story is finished and there remains but a few additional words to say and our task is ended.

The man with the tattooed hand lies in a pauper's grave, his property all dissipated, his friends all departed, his kinsmen disowning him.

Richard Blauvelt has gone abroad to bury his sorrow and shame in a foreign land, and the mysterious Mr. Golden has disappeared, no one knows whither.

The estate of Blauvelt has gone to pieces, the house is sold, and everything is scattered, the bank having never revived, though the claims of the poor depositors were settled by Golden before his disappearance.

The man of mystery has accomplished his revenge and will never more be seen, but Noll Sturtevant, now well on in years, with his lovely wife, once the princess Ayama, are enjoying their princely wealth abroad, while forgotten by the world or remaining only as a memory faint and indistinct is the story of Golden the banker, of his strange vengeance and of the Tattooed Hand.

Next week's issue will contain "MARK MANLEY, THE YOUNG ENGINEER." A Story of Stirring Adventures on the Rail.

SPECIAL NOTICE:—All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York City, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail

A MASKED MYSTERY

AN UP-TO-DATE SERIAL STORY

By J. T. BROUGHAM

(CHAPTER XXIV—*Continued*)

Jim was rendered perfectly helpless.

A groan escaped his pale lips.

"You've gained your point!" he hissed.

"I knew I would!" replied Tom.

"Let me up; you hurt my back."

"All right, my boy; you are safe enough now."

Hawkins arose with a sullen scowl on his brow.

"I've got one consolation," he growled, "and that is the shot and the trouble I have given you—see the point? It wasn't an easy job now, was it?"

"Hawkins, you are a fool."

"What for—suffering capture?"

"For resisting and causing all this needless trouble. You ought to have known I'd get you in the end."

"And now I suppose you'll hang me?"

"No. I told you the truth about Harvey Midnight."

"What! Do you mean to say you wasn't bluffing?"

"I told you the truth, I said."

"Well—I'll—be—blowed!"

"You should have believed me."

"So I suppose. But how was it discovered?"

"The chief did it."

"Oh, I see—while Harvey was in jail?"

"Of course. Do you recollect the 8th and 10th of September?"

"Very well. Midnight was with me those nights."

"And sent you to New York?"

"Yes."

"After you was gone he poisoned your uncle."

"The deuce!"

"And wore your clothing while doing it."

"Then that is what convicted me, eh?"

"Yes. But come—the horse is waiting."

"What are you going to do with me now?"

"We'll return to Garrisons and take a train to New York."

Tom searched his prisoner, and finding the thousand dollars in his pocket, he was about to keep it when Hawkins knocked it down in the creek, where it was lost.

"You won't deprive me of that—see the point?" he hissed.

"You simply spited yourself," said Tom, indifferently. "Come to prison."

Hawkins did not like the prospect, but there was no use in resisting, so he docilely accompanied Tom.

They both mounted the horse and slowly rode back to Garrisons, where they met the boatman.

"Ah," said he, "I see you've got him?"

"Yes—your plan worked like a charm."

"Good enough. I'll take the horse back home now."

"And I'll wait in the depot for the next train."

It was not long before the train came along and they boarded it, and were whirled off to the metropolis.

During the trip Hawkins did not utter a word but kept thinking intently, and the detective retained a hold on him.

They alighted at the Grand Central, and entering a cab, they were driven away toward the Central office.

"I say, Tom," said Hawkins. "Do me a favor?"

"What do you want?" asked the detective.

"Have you got a pencil and a piece of paper?"

"Yes."

"Then write a note for me, will you?"

"Who to?"

"Maud."

"What shall I write?"

"Ask her to come to see me in jail."

"What for?"

"Say I've got something important to tell her."

The detective pondered.

"If I do I may have a chance yet to learn something of their secret," he thought.

Then he drew a pencil and note book from his pocket.

"All right," said he. "But how is she to get it?"

"Stop at a messenger office and send it."

"Very well."

The detective opened the book, and indited a brief note.

When it was finished, he held it up, and glanced at it, Hawkins lurching himself forward and peering over his shoulder to read what was written.

The shock of Hawkins' body striking against Tom's knocked the pencil from the detective's hand.

"Clumsy!" he exclaimed.

Then he stooped over to pick it up.

This was just what Hawkins designed.

He made a sudden kick upward, the toe of his boot striking the detective on the temple.

It was a crushing blow.

A groan pealed from Tom's lips, and he fell over on the floor in a senseless condition.

"By Jove, I am fortunate!" chuckled Hawkins. "I knew I'd trick him before he jugged me, and my plan succeeded. Just as if I wanted to see Maud at any jail. This detective must be a fool to believe such a yarn as that."

Then he stooped over, turned his body around, and feeling in Tom's vest pocket, he withdrew the key of the handcuffs, and easily unlocked the bracelets.

Then he deliberately fastened them on the detective.

By this time the vehicle was dangerously close to Mulbery street, and he knew he must make haste.

Opening the door, he sprang out in the street, ran around a corner, and the vehicle dashed on with the door standing wide open.

Tom lay inside in a heap, and the cab reached the central office, and came to a pause at the door.

The cabman alighted, and opened the other door.

"Hallos! What's this?" he muttered, upon catching sight of the prostrate form of the insensible detective.

A policeman standing in the doorway of the Central Office came down to the carriage, and asked:

"What is the matter?"

"See there!" replied the cabman.

"Why—it is Tom Wonder."

"Sick, ain't he?"

"Unconscious, and as I live, handcuffed, too."

"But where's the other chap?"

"What other one?"

"Why he had another man handcuffed."

"I see—the prisoner has escaped."

"Then that's how the opposite door is open."

"Tom's capture has turned the tables on him."

"And this one's got an ugly bruise on his temple."

"Didn't you hear anything of the trouble?"

"Not a sound."

"Here—help me to carry him inside."

"Certainly. Will you see that I'm paid?"

"Of course I will. Come on—lift him."

They seized the senseless man, and lifting him out of the vehicle, he was carried into the inspector's office.

A physician was summoned, the handcuffs were taken from his wrists, the cabman dismissed, and steps were taken to restore him to his senses.

Tom received a very severe blow.

Some time elasped before his senses came back, and then the situation was explained to him.

He was disgusted.

It was hard to lose his game after he had it in his hands.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD MAID'S HOME.

Tom explained to the inspector what had happened to him, and when he finished, the chief said:

"Without exception he is the slipperist rascal this department ever went hunting. But never mind, Tom, you may have better luck next time."

The detective's injuries were painful, but did not amount to anything serious, and he replied:

"As soon as I recover myself a little, I'm going after him again, and I'll hang on to his trail until I capture the beggar again."

"It is quite necessary that we have him, for he can supply the missing links of evidence to fully establish the conviction of Harvey Midnight."

"Did you glean any more information from him?"

"No—not an iota."

"He is obstinate."

"Very. But he is on his guard now. He sent for Miss Postboy, but she absolutely refused to call on him."

"What did he want of her?"

"I could not find out."

"Have you heard from the coroner yet?"

"Oh, yes. He has got the paper from out of the old negress's stomach. The writing, he sent me word, is perfectly decipherable, and the paper was torn in small pieces. But he is going to paste it together on a sheet of paper, and will send it here to-day or to-morrow for you."

"That is good news. Did he say what it said?"

"No, not a word."

Tom's curiosity was sadly disappointed, but he had to restrain his impatience as best he could.

The next day would probably tell the story he was so anxious to learn, and he said:

"Well, I'll have to wait, I presume. I'm ready to go again, inspector. When I return again, it will be with Jim Hawkins a prisoner, or my own body cold."

Then he left the office.

What was the likeliest place for him to find Hawkins now? he thought when he got in the street.

"The rascal is now penniless!" the detective muttered, "for he knocked his ill-gotten thousand dollars down in the creek, below Garrisons. Hence he will not be able to get away unless he supplies himself with cash. The only one he is sure of getting any from would be Maud Postboy. Consequently he will wait for her. I'll watch Betsy Trotwood's house, for I am sure of finding him there sooner or later and then I can get hold of him once more."

The detective made his way toward Greenwich avenue, and arriving at the fat old maid's house he knocked at the door for admittance, and Miss Trotwood opened the door.

"Well, well, well!" she gasped with a good natured smile as she advanced her fat hand very cordially and shook Tom's. I'm so glad to see you again, Mr. Wonder. But what brings you here this afternoon?"

"I wish to see Miss Postboy."

"Then come in—step into the parlor."

Tom complied, and found himself in a very cozily furnished apartment.

"Has she had any callers to-day?" he asked.

"No, indeed. Poor child, she is lying down with a sick headache in her own room. She has not fully recovered from the excitement of her adventure yet. It is too bad that she has got such a dreadful wicked cousin. And do you know what she told me? She nearly drove me into convulsions by saying he was the same thief that stole the jewelry you recovered for me."

"It is true, too," said Tom.

"Dear me! who would have believed it? Now, I don't think I'll run such risks in future, Mr. Wonder for I am going to —ah—to—ah——"

"Well, what? Why are you blushing and stammering so?"

"You know Mr. Crab, sir?"

"Ah! I see—you have consented?"

"Yes, I am going to become Mrs. Crab soon, and Christopher has sworn in his zealous way to love, honor, respect, protect and obey me. He is a good old soul, and pretty frisky for a man of his age, and is the soul of devotion to me, Mr. Wonder. Do you know that I dote on his old shaky body?"

"Do you? Well, I wish you joy with all my heart?"

"Thank you, sir. But here I am so interested in my own affairs I'm forgetting all about Maud, and you, perhaps, very anxious to see her, too."

"Oh, there is no hurry," said Tom.

The fat and buxom old maid laughed and waddled out of the room to summon the girl.

When Maud came in her face betrayed evidence of the anxiety of mind she had been passing through.

"It is a matter of vital importance which calls me here to-day, Miss Postboy," said Tom, after the first salutations were exchanged. "Your cousin is at large again, and I surmise that he may pay you a call in quest of money again, so I have come to lay in wait for him at this house."

"You are welcome to stay," said the girl simply.

"It may afford you some protection, too."

"Mr. Wonder, it is hard that I am so persecuted."

"I am sorry for you, but it won't last long now."

"If you could only arrest him——"

"And I mean to do so."

"I would not care what happens."

"Then you are in fear of his arrest."

"He might expose my secret."

"Harvey Midnight retained it in jail."

"True—but with only self-interest in view."

"Why shouldn't Hawkins do so, too?"

"That is the risk I dread to see tested."

"What did Midnight send for you for?"

"To try to secure bail for him."

"But none would be accepted."

"I know. He thought that the district attorney would fix the matter for him, though. Any way, I refused."

"And you acted quite right."

"He may tell all he knows about me before he goes to the gallows, if the death sentence is passed on him."

"Will the exposure of this secret of yours do you any particular harm?" asked Tom.

"More than you can imagine."

"I hope you have committed no crime?"

"Mr. Wonder, do you wish to insult me?"

Maud's face flushed indignantly.

"No, no!" exclaimed Tom hastily. "Far from it. I only can judge the case in the mysterious light in which it is presented to me. The question is justifiable."

"Pardon me," said Maud, with a smile. "I was hasty, but as I am innocent of crime of course the question hurt my feelings. No. I did no deed for which I would have to blush with shame, or fear a prison cell. You have my word for it."

"And I believe you," said Tom, warmly. "You must excuse my questions. They are natural. I have only your own interest uppermost in my mind, Miss Postboy. That is all. In future I shall not trouble you with questions about the matter. If I can aid you depend on my assistance. If at any time you choose to confide in me do so. I am your friend, and will be a good one, too."

The detective was getting bewitched with the girl, for she had made a deeper impression on his heart than he cared to acknowledge to himself.

Nor did she seem to be averse to him.

Such a ripening condition of affairs was bound to become augmented in due time.

Just then a ring came at the door-bell, and Miss Trotwood went to answer the summons.

"Is Miss Postboy in?"

As these words reached Tom's ears he started.

"It has turned out as I expected," he muttered. "Jim Hawkins has come. Entertain him, Miss Maud!"

The detective glided behind a portiere, and the girl arose to her feet just as Betsy Trotwood ushered Jim Hawkins into the parlor, saying:

"Here she is, sir."

"Good heavens! You to pester me again!" ejaculated Maud.

"My dear cousin," replied Jim, with a sardonic grin, "I'm always looking for you, it seems—see the point?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

STOP THIEF!

Jim Hawkins glanced keenly around the parlor, and seeing that the two women were evidently alone, he assumed his careless, devil-may-care air, flung himself into a chair, and lit a cigar.

"No objection, I hope, old lady?" he said to Betsy.

"Well, I declare—that is cheeky!" said Miss Trotwood.

"Ill mannered and disgusting as ever!" said Maud.

"Oh, come, ladies, don't be clams."

"What do you want of me?"

"Wait. You'll see. How impolite you are. You haven't introduced me to this fat old party here, Maud."

"Oh! How insulting he is!" gasped Betsy.

Her face turned scarlet, and she glanced around in quest of Tom to ask for his assistance, but catching Maud's glance she was warned to keep still.

"Impolite?" said Maud. "Well, I'll introduce you. Miss Trotwood, this is the man who robbed you."

"Goodness me!" gasped the old maid, holding up her hands in horror, and starting back.

Jim laughed sardonically again.

"Don't be a clam," said he reassuringly. "I am not going to hurt you, old gal."

"Worse and worse!" sputtered Betsy.

"I suppose she is your landlady Maud?"

"Oh, leave her alone, and tell me what you want."

"Can't you guess?"

"Money, I suppose?"

"How well you know my chronic complaint of always being short in the purse—see the point? Maud, you are a regular little fortune teller, 'pon my word."

He chuckled and laughed and clapped his knees, and puffed at his cigar.

Tom Wonder was crouching a few feet from behind his back, peering out through the opening between the portieres at him.

The detective did not observe that his face was reflected in a looking-glass between the front windows, and that Hawkins suddenly saw it.

The sly rascal did not betray the fact, however, but calmly puffing away at his cigar, he said:

"Say, Maude, can I speak to you in private?"

"If you want me to leave the room," commenced Miss Trotwood, flaring up angrily, "I will go."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, my fat child," said Jim, patronizingly; "you are too clumsy to amble around. See the point? We are younger and spryer than you are; so if you will excuse us we will just step out into the hall for a moment and have our say out."

"Oh, certainly," frigidly said Betsy.

"Will you accompany me, my dear?" asked Jim.

"Yes," said Maud, who hoped to hold the man so that Tom could make a prisoner of him.

They both left the room.

Tom stepped out from behind the portieres.

The moment they got out in the hall Hawkins softly opened the front door and said:

"Tell Tom Wonder I was too smart for him—see?"

And as Maud uttered a scream he ran out of the house and darted up the street.

The detective heard Maud's cry, and ran out in the hall, fearing that Hawkins had assaulted her.

He saw the girl leaning against the hat rack, and hurrying over to her side he exclaimed:

"What is the matter? Are you hurt?"

"No—but he has fled."

"Fled? Did he know I was here?"

"He told me to tell you he was too smart for you."

"I hope Miss Trotwood did not tell him I was here?"

"No, indeed. He must have seen you."

"Then I'm off after him at once."

Tom dashed out into the street, and saw the sly Hawkins running at the top of his speed.

"Stop thief! Stop thief!" yelled Tom.

(This story will be continued in our next issue)

ALL AROUND WEEKLY

Containing Stories of All Kinds

BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS

ISSUED FRIDAYS **HANDSOME COLORED COVERS** **32 PAGES** **PRICE 5 CENTS**

This weekly contains a variety of long, interesting stories of a kind which you cannot get in any other publication. They are written by the best authors, and are illustrated by the most expert artists. We intend to make this weekly increase in interest with each new number. Only the most popular kind of stories will appear in its pages. We intend to please everybody, and shall spare neither money nor work to make it one of the best-liked periodicals on the market.

THE ISSUES ALREADY PUBLISHED CONTAIN THE STORIES LISTED BELOW AND MUCH OTHER INTERESTING MATTER.

1 Engineer Ned; or, Running the Night Express.
2 "Stand Together"; or, The Young Firemen of Clinton.
3 Wine and Cards. A Temperance Story.
4 "Phantom," the Prairie Trapper.
5 The Hidden Treasure; or, Among the Cannibals.
6 Phil Faraday, the Young Explorer; or, Adventures in Savage Africa.
7 The Dark Corners of New York; or, The Perils of a District Telegraph Messenger.
8 The Steps of Doom. A Tale of the Land of the Incas.
9 "Old Sixty"; or, The Last Run of the Special.
10 The Secrets of the Diamond Island.
11 Galloping O'Hagan; or, The Bold Free Rider.
12 The Young Sinbad; or, Back from the Grave for Vengeance.
13 Schoolboys Afloat; or, A Trip Around the World.
14 Among the Thugs; or, Two Yankee Boys in India.
15 The Secret Glen; or, The Mysterious War-Chief.
16 Lost in the Heart of China; or, A Yankee Boy in the Land of Skulls.
17 Ruined by Drink; or, Jack Jordan's Peril. A Temperance Story.
18 Young Franklin; or, Buried Under the Snow.
19 Winning a Wager; or, Two Boys' Trip Around the World.
20 The Hidden Avenger. A Story of Mexico.
21 Roy, the Western Union Telegraph Messenger.
22 The Wild Best Hunters; or, Adventures in Brazil.
23 The Flying Scud. A Romance of the Ever Faithful Isle.
24 Against the Sultan; or, Trapped in a Turkish Rebellion.
25 Frank Melville, the Wonder of the Circus Ring.
26 "Little Dot"; or, The Dandy Scout of the Plains.
27 The Hook and Ladder Boys; or, The Best Firemen in Town.
28 The Young Cliff Climber; or, A Tale of the Andes.
29 The Ourang Outang Hunters; or, Adventures in the Dark Continent.
30 Virginia Dick; or, A Southern Boy in the Mexican War.
31 Lost Under Ground; or, A Week in the Dark.
32 The Landlord's Son; or, Saved from a Drunkard's Grave.
33 The Young Drover; or, The Secret Order of the Northwest.
34 The Boy Captives of the Zulus. A Tale of Adventures in Africa.
35 General Grant's Boy Spy; or, The Hero of Five Forks.
36 Iceberg Jack, the Hero of the Arctic.
37 The Island Captive; or, Donald Kane's Victory.
38 Saved in Time; or, The Downward Course of Dick Ballard.
39 The Black Cross; or, The Mysteries of the Jungle.
40 The Boy Wizard of the Nile; or, The Mystery of Pharaoh's Temple.
41 Deserted in Dismal Swamp; or, The Secrets of the Lone Hut.
42 Danger Signal Dave, the Dashing Boy Engineer of the West.
43 Matt the Avenger; or, Fighting the Mexican Bandits.
44 The Wizard of the Waves. A Story of Life and Adventure on Land and Sea.
45 The Golden Skull; or, A Boy's Adventures in Australia.
46 Pacific Dick. A Stirring Tale of the Indian Isles.
47 Cyclone, the Horse Runner; or, The Young Lassoer of the Plains.
48 After the Big Diamond; or, The Star on the Arm. (A Story of India.)
49 Marked Men; or, The Best Card Last.
50 Cruise of the Silver Wing. A Story of the Sea.
51 The Hand of Fate; or, The Hawks of New York.
52 The Spy of Toronto. A Story of 1812.
53 Dick the Pilot; or, The River Pirate's Plot. A Tale of the Mississippi.
54 Ranch 5. A Story of the "'49ers."
55 Fighting Jack; or, A Yankee Boy in Africa.
56 One Thousand Miles on Skates. A Story of Exciting Adventures.
57 Black Hills Bill; or, The Gold of Canyon Gulch.
58 Fighting the Savages; or, The Pearl of the Pacific.
59 Bravest of the Brave. A Story of the Mexican War.
60 Harpoon Harry; or, The Castaways of the Antarctic.
61 Hank Monk, the Stage Driver of the Pacific Slope.
62 The Tattooed Hand. A Strange Story of Sea and Land.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, **24 Union Square, N. Y.**

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our Weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following Order Blank and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

.....

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York. 19

DEAR SIR—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

....copies of WORK AND WIN, Nos.....
.... " " FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " ALL AROUND WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " WILD WEST WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....
.... " " SECRET SERVICE. Nos.....
.... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....
.... " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name..... Street and No.....Town ..... State .....